J. H. Flather

From his Friend, W. P.

With his best wishes.

June 1886.

POEMS

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POEMS

BY

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH, D.D.

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THE

STORY OF JUSTIN MARTYR.

SEE JUSTIN MARTYR'S FIRST DIALOGUE WITH TRYPHO.

IT seems to me like yesterday,
The morning when I took my way
On that lone shore—in solitude ;
For in that miserable mood
It was relief to quit the ken
And the inquiring looks of men,
The looks of love and gentleness,
And pity, that would fain express
Its only purpose was to know,
That, knowing, it might soothe my woe :
But when I felt that I was free
From searching gaze, it was to me
Like ending of a dreary task,
Or putting off a cumbrous mask.
I wandered forth upon the shore,
Wishing this lie of life was o'er ;
What was beyond I could not guess,
I thought it might be quietness,
And now I had no dream of bliss,
No thought, no other hope but this,
To be at rest ;—for all that fed
The dream of my proud youth had fled

My dream of youth that I would be
Happy and glorious, wise and free,
In mine own right, and keep my state,
And would repel the heavy weight,
The load that crushed unto the ground
The servile multitude around.
The purpose of my life had failed,
The heavenly heights I would have scaled
Seemed more than ever out of sight,
Further beyond my feeble flight.
The beauty of the universe
Was lying on me like a curse ;
Only the lone surge at my feet
Uttered a soothing murmur sweet,
As every broken weary wave
Sank gently to a quiet grave,
Dying on the bosom of the sea :
And death grew beautiful to me,
Until it seemed a mother mild,
And I like some too happy child—
A happy child, that tired with play,
Through a long summer holiday,
Runs to his mother's arms to weep
His little weariness asleep.
Rest—rest—all passion that once stirred
My heart, had ended in one word—
My one desire to be at rest,
To lay my head on any breast,
Where there was hope that I might keep
A dreamless and unbroken sleep ;
And the lulled Ocean seemed to say,
'With me is quiet—come away.'
There was a tale which oft had stirred
My bosom deeply : you have heard
How that the treacherous sea-maid's art
With song inveigles the lost heart

Of some lone fisher, that has stood
For days beside the glimmering flood ;
And when has grown upon him there
The mystery of earth and air,
He cannot find with whom to part
The burden lying at his heart ;
So when the mermaid bids him come,
And summons to her peaceful home,
He hears—he leaps into the wave,
To find a home, and not a grave.
It stirred me now ; and sweet seemed death ;
The ceasing of this painful breath,
The laying down this life of care,
The breathing of a purer air—
Sweet seemed they all—a richer thing
Death, than whatever life could bring.

Anon I said I would not die ;
I loathed to live—I feared to die—
So I went forward, till I stood
Amid a marble solitude,
A ruined town of ancient day.
I rested where some steps away
From other work of human hand
Two solitary columns stand,
Two columns on a mild hill-side,
Like sea-marks of a shrunken tide :
Their shafts were by the sea-breeze worn,
Beneath them waved the verdant corn ;
But a few paces from the crown
Of that green summit, farther down,
A fallen pillar on the plain,
Slow sinking in the earth again,
Bedding itself in dark black mould,
Lay moveless, where it first had rolled.

It once had been a pillar high,
And pointing to the starry sky ;
But now lay prostrate, its own weight
Now serving but to fix its state,
To sink it in its earthy bed.
I gazed, and to myself I said,
'This pillar lying on the plain
The hand of man might raise again,
And set it as in former days ;
But the fall'n spirit who shall raise,
What power on earth ? what power in heaven ?'
How quickly was an answer given
Unto this voice of my despair !
But now I sat in silence there,
I thought upon the vanished time,
And my irrevocable prime,
My baffled purpose, wasted years,
My sin, my misery—and my tears
Fell thick and fast upon the sands ;
I hid my face within my hands,
For tears are strange that find their way
Under the open eye of day,
Under the broad and glorious sun,
Full in the heavens, as mine have done,
And as upon that day they did,
Unnoticed, unrestrained, unchid.
How long I might have let them flow
Without a check, I do not know,
But presently, while yet I kept
That attitude of woe, and wept,
A strange voice sounded in mine ears—
You cannot wash your heart with tears !'
I quickly turned, and vexed to be
Seen in my spirit's agony,
In anger had almost replied.
An aged man was at my side ;

I think that since my life began,
I never saw an older man
Than he who stood beside me then,
And with mild accents said again:
'You cannot cleanse your heart with tears,
Though you should weep as many years
As our first Father, when he sat
Uncomforted on Ararat—
This would not help you, and the tear
Which does not heal, will scald and sear.
What is your sorrow?'

Until now
I never had unveiled my woe—
Not that I shunned sweet sympathies,
Man's words, or woman's pitying eyes;
But that I felt they were in vain,
And could not help me; for the pain,
The wound which I was doomed to feel,
Man gave not, and he could not heal.
But in this old man's speech and tone
Was something that allured me on;
I told him all—I did not hide
My sin, my sorrow, or my pride:
I told him how, when I began
First to verge upward to a man,
These thoughts were mine—to dwell alone,
My spirit on its lordly throne,
Hating the vain stir, fierce and loud,
The din of the tumultuous crowd;
And how I thought to arm my soul,
And stablish it in self-control;
And said I would obey the right,
And would be strong in wisdom's might,
And bow unto my own heart's law,
And keep my heart from speck or flaw,

That in its mirror I might find
A reflex of the Eternal mind,
A glass to give me back the truth—
And how before me from my youth
A phantom ever on the wing,
Appearing now, now vanishing,
Had flitted, looking out from shrine,
From painting, or from work divine
Of poet's, or of sculptor's art ;
And how I feared it might depart,
That beauty which alone could shed
Light on my life—and then I said,
I would beneath its shadow dwell,
And would all lovely things compel,
All that was beautiful or fair
In art or nature, earth or air,
To be as ministers to me,
To keep me pure, to keep me free
From worldly service, from the chain
Of custom, and from earthly stain ;
And how they kept me for awhile,
And did my foolish heart beguile ;
Yet all at last did faithless prove,
And, late or soon, betrayed my love ;
How they had failed me one by one,
Till now, my youth yet scarcely done,
The heart, which I had thought to steep
In hues of beauty, and to keep
Its consecrated home and fane,
That heart was soiled with many a stain.
Which from without and from within
Had gathered there, till all was sin,
Till now I only drew my breath,
I lived but in the hope of death.

While my last words were giving place
To my heart's anguish, o'er his face

A shadow of displeasure past,
But vanished then again as fast
As the breeze-shadow from the brook ;
And with soft words and pitying look
He gently said—
'Ah me, my son,
A weary course your life has run ;
And yet it need not be in vain,
That you have suffered all this pain ;
And if my years might make me bold
To speak, methinks I could unfold
Why in such efforts you could meet
But only misery and defeat.
Yet deem not of us as at strife,
Because you set before your life
A purpose and a loftier aim
Than the blind lives of men may claim
For the most part—or that you sought,
By fixed resolve and solemn thought,
To lift your being's calm estate
Out of the range of time and fate.
Glad am I that a thing unseen,
A spiritual Presence, this has been
Your worship, this your young heart stirred.
But yet herein you proudly erred,
Here may the source of woe be found,
You thought to fling, yourself around,
The atmosphere of light and love
In which it was your joy to move ;
You thought by efforts of your own
To take at last each jarring tone
Out of your life, till all should meet
In one majestic music sweet ;
And deemed that in our own heart's ground
The root of good was to be found,
And that by careful watering
And earnest tendance we might bring

The bud, the blossom, and the fruit
To grow and flourish from that root.
You deemed we needed nothing more
Than skill and courage to explore
Deep down enough in our own heart,
To where the well-head lay apart,
Which must the springs of being feed,
And that these fountains did but need
The soil that choked them moved away,
To bubble in the open day.
But, thanks to heaven, it is not so,
That root a richer soil doth know
Than our poor hearts could e'er supply,
That stream is from a source more high ;
From God it came, to God returns,
Not nourished from our scanty urns,
But fed from his unfailing river,
Which runs and will run on for ever.'

When now he came to heavenly things,
And spake of them, his spirit had wings,
His words seemed not his own, but given.
I could have deemed one spake from heaven
Of hope and joy, of life and death,
And immortality through faith,
Of that great change commenced within,
The blood that cleanses from all sin,
That can wash out the inward stain,
And consecrate the heart again,
The voice that clearer and more clear
Speaks ever to the purgëd ear,
The gracious influences given
In a continued stream from heaven,
The balm that can the soul's hurt heal,
The Spirit's witness and its seal.

I listened, for unto mine ear
The word which I had longed to hear,
Was come at last, the lifeful word
Which I had often almost heard
In some deep silence of my breast—
For with a sense of dim unrest
That word unborn had often wrought,
And struggled in the womb of thought,
As from beneath the smothering earth
The seed strives upward to a birth:
And lo! it now was born indeed;
Here was the answer to my need.

But now we parted, never more
To meet upon that lone sea-shore.
We have not met on earth again,
And scarcely shall; there doth remain
A time, a place where we shall meet,
And have the stars beneath our feet.
Since then I many times have sought
Who this might be, and sometimes thought
It must have been an angel sent
To be a special instrument
And minister of grace to me;
Or deemed again it might be he,
Of whom some say he shall not die,
Till he have seen with mortal eye
The glory of his Lord again;
But this is a weak thought and vain.

We parted, each upon our way—
I homeward, where my glad course lay
Beside those ruins where I sate
On that same morning—desolate,—
With scarcely strength enough to grieve:
And now it was a marvellous eve;

The waters at my feet were bright,
And breaking into isles of light:
The misty sunset did enfold
A thousand floating motes of gold;
The red light seemed to penetrate
Through the worn stone, and re-create
The old, to glorify anew;
And steeping all things through and through
A rich dissolving splendour poured
Through rent and fissure, and restored
The fall'n, the falling, and decayed,
Filling the rifts which time had made,
Till the rent masses seemed to meet,
The pillar stand upon its feet,
And tower and cornice, roof and stair
Hung self-upheld in the magic air.
Transfigured thus those temples stood
Upon the margin of the flood,
All glorious as they rose of yore;
There standing, as not ever more
They could be harmed by touch of time,
But still, as in that perfect prime,
Must flourish unremoved and free,
Or as they then appeared to me,
A newer and more glorious birth,
A City of that other earth,
That Earth which is to be.

THE MONK AND BIRD.

AS he who finds one flower sharp thorns among,
Plucks it, and highly prizes, though before
Careless regard on thousands he has flung,
As fair as this or more ;

Not otherwise perhaps this argument
Won from me, where I found it, such regard,
That I esteemed no labour thereon spent
As wearisome or hard.

In huge and antique volume did it lie,
That by two solemn clasps was duly bound,
As neither to be opened nor laid by
But with due thought profound.

There fixëd thought to questions did I lend,
Which hover on the bounds of mortal ken,
And have perplexed, and will unto the end
Perplex the brains of men ;

Of what is time, and what eternity,
Of all that seems and is not—forms of things—
Till my tired spirit followed painfully
On flagging weary wings ;

So that I welcomed this one resting-place,
Pleased as a bird, which, when its forces fail,
Lights panting in the ocean's middle space
Upon a sunny sail.

And now the grace of fiction, which has power
To render things impossible believed,
And win them with the credence of an hour
To be for truths received—

That grace must help me, as it only can,
Winning such transient credence, while I tell
What to a cloistered solitary man
In distant times befell.

Him little might our earthly grandeur feed,
Who to the uttermost was vowed to be
A follower of his Master's barest need
In holy poverty.

Nor might he know the gentle mutual strife
Of home-affections, which can more or less
Temper with sweet the bitter of our life,
And lighten its distress.

Yet we should err to deem that he was left
To bear alone our being's lonely weight,
Or that his soul was vacant and bereft
Of pomp and inward state:

Morn, when before the sun his orb unshrouds,
Swift as a beacon torch the light has sped,
Kindling the dusky summits of the clouds
Each to a fiery red—

The slanted columns of the noon-day light,
Let down into the bosom of the hills,
Or sunset, that with golden vapour bright
The purple mountains fills—

These made him say,—If God has so arrayed
A fading world that quickly passes by,
Such rich provision of delight has made
For every human eye,

What shall the eyes that wait for him survey,
Where his own presence gloriously appears
In worlds that were not founded for a day,
But for eternal years?

And if at seasons this world's undelight
Oppressed him, or the hollow at its heart,
One glance at those enduring mansions bright
Made gloomier thoughts depart;

Till many times the sweetness of the thought
Of an eternal country—where it lies
Removed from care and mortal anguish, brought
Sweet tears into his eyes.

Thus, not unsolaced, he longwhile abode,
Filling all dreary melancholy time
And empty spaces of the heart with God,
And with this hope sublime:

Even thus he lived, with little joy or pain
Drawn through the channels whereby men receive—
Most men receive the things which for the main
Make them rejoice or grieve.

But for delight, on spiritual gladness fed,
And obvious to temptations of like kind;
One such, from out his very gladness bred,
It was his lot to find.

When first it came, he lightly put it by,
But it returned again to him ere long,
And ever having got some new ally,
And every time more strong—

A little worm that gnawed the life away
Of a tall plant, the canker of its root,
Or like as when from some small speck decay
Spreads o'er a beauteous fruit.

For still the doubt came back,—Can God provide
For the large heart of man what shall not pall,
Nor through eternal ages' endless tide
On tired spirits fall?

Here but one look tow'rd heaven will oft repress
The crushing weight of undelightful care;
But what were there beyond, if weariness
Should ever enter there?

Yet do not sweetest things here soonest cloy?
Satiety the life of joy would kill,
If sweet with bitter, pleasure with annoy
Were not attempered still.

This mood endured, till every act of love,
Vigils of praise and prayer, and midnight choir,
All shadows of the service done above,
And which, while his desire,

And while his hope was heavenward, he had loved,
As helps to disengage him from the chain
That fastens unto earth—all these now proved
Most burdensome and vain.

What must have been the issue of that mood
It were a thing to fear—but that one day,
Upon the limits of an ancient wood,
His thoughts him led astray.

Darkling he went, nor once applied his ear,
(On a loud sea of agitations thrown,)
Nature's low tones and harmonies to hear,
Heard by the calm alone.

The merry chirrup of the grasshopper,
Sporting among the roots of withered grass,
The dry leaf rustling to the wind's light stir,
Did each unnoted pass:

He, walking in a trance of selfish care,
Not once observed the beauty shed around,
The blue above, the music in the air,
The flowers upon the ground:

Till from the centre of that forest dim
Came to him such sweet singing of a bird,
As, sweet in very truth, then seemed to him
The sweetest ever heard.

That lodestar drew him onward inward still,
Deeper than where the village children stray,
Deeper than where the woodman's glittering bill
Lops the large boughs away—

Into a central space of glimmering shade,
Where hardly might the struggling sunbeams pass,
Which a faint lattice-work of light had made
Upon the long lank grass.

He did not sit, but stood and listened there,
And to him listening the time seemed not long,
While that sweet bird above him filled the air
With its melodious song.

He heard not, saw not, felt not aught beside,
Through the wide worlds of pleasure and of pain,
Save the full flowing and the ample tide
Of that celestial strain.

As though a bird of Paradise should light
A moment on a twig of this bleak earth,
And singing songs of Paradise invite
All hearts to holy mirth,

And then take wing to Paradise again,
Leaving all listening spirits raised above
The toil of earth, the trouble, and the pain,
And melted all in love:

Such hidden might, such power was in the sound;
But when it ceased sweet music to unlock,
The spell that held him sense and spirit-bound
Dissolved with a slight shock.

All things around were as they were before—
The trees, and the blue sky, and sunshine bright,
Painting the pale and leafstrewn forest-floor
With patches of faint light.

But as when music doth no longer thrill,
Light shudderings yet along the chords will run,
Or the heart vibrates tremulously still,
Although its prayer be done,

So his heart fluttered all the way he went,
Listening each moment for the vesper bell ;
For a long hour he deemed he must have spent
In that untrodden dell.

And once it seemed that something new or strange
Had passed upon the flowers, the trees, the ground ;
Some slight but unintelligible change
On everything around :

Such change, where all things undisturbed remain,
As only to the eye of him appears,
Who absent long, at length returns again—
The silent work of years.

And ever grew upon him more and more
Fresh marvel—for, unrecognized of all,
He stood a stranger at the convent door :
New faces filled the hall.

Yet was it long ere he received the whole
Of that strange wonder—how, while he had stood
Lost in deep gladness of his inmost soul,
Far hidden in that wood,

Three generations had gone down unseen
Under the thin partition that is spread—
The thin partition of thin earth—between
The living and the dead.

Nor did he many days to earth belong,
For like a pent-up stream, released again,
The years arrested by the strength of song
Came down on him amain ;

Sudden as a dissolving thaw in spring ;
Gentle as when upon the first warm day,
Which sunny April in its train may bring,
The snow melts all away.

They placed him in his former cell, and there
Watched him departing ; what few words he said
Were of calm peace and gladness, with one care
Mingled—one only dread—

Lest an eternity should not suffice
To take the measure and the breadth and height
Of what there is reserved in Paradise—
Its ever-new delight.

TO A CHILD PLAYING.

DEAR boy, thy momentary laughter rings
Sincerely out, and that spontaneous glee,
Seeming to need no hint from outward things,
Breaks forth in sudden shoutings, loud and free.

From what hid fountains doth thy joyance flow,
That borrows nothing from the world around ?
Its springs must deeper lie than we can know,
A well whose springs lie safely underground.

So be it ever—and, thou happy boy,
When time, that takes these wild delights away,
Gives thee a measure of sedater joy,
Which, unlike this, shall ever with thee stay ;

Then may that joy, like this, to outward things
  Owe nothing, but lie safe beneath the sod,
A hidden fountain fed from unseen springs,
  From the glad-making river of our God.

A WALK IN A CHURCHYARD.

WE walked within the Churchyard bounds,
  My little boy and I—
He laughing, running happy rounds,
  I pacing mournfully.

'Nay, child! it is not well,' I said,
  'Among the graves to shout,
To laugh and play among the dead,
  And make this noisy rout.'

A moment to my side he clung,
  Leaving his merry play,
A moment stilled his joyous tongue,
  Almost as hushed as they;

Then, quite forgetting the command
  In life's exulting burst
Of early glee, let go my hand,
  Joyous as at the first.

And now I did not check him more,
  For, taught by Nature's face,
I had grown wiser than before
  Even in that moment's space:

She spread no funeral pall above
That patch of churchyard ground,
But the same azure vault of love
As hung o'er all around.

And white clouds o'er that spot would pass
As freely as elsewhere;
The sunshine on no other grass
A richer hue might wear.

And formed from out that very mould
In which the dead did lie,
The daisy with its eye of gold
Looked up into the sky.

The rook was wheeling overhead,
Nor hastened to be gone—
The small bird did its glad notes shed,
Perched on a grey head-stone.

And God, I said, would never give
This light upon the earth,
Nor bid in childhood's heart to live
These springs of gushing mirth,

If our one wisdom was to mourn,
And linger with the dead,
To nurse, as wisest, thoughts forlorn
Of worm and earthy bed.

Oh no, the glory earth puts on,
The child's unchecked delight,
Both witness to a triumph won—
(If we but read aright,)

A triumph won o'er sin and death,
From these the Saviour saves ;
And, like a happy infant, Faith
Can play among the graves.

TO ——,

ON THE DAY OF HER BAPTISM.

THIS will we name thy better birth-day, child,
Oh born already to a sin-worn world,
But now unto a kingdom undefiled,
Where over thee love's banner is unfurled.

Lo ! on the morning of this holy day
I lay aside the weight of human fears,
Which I had for thee, and without dismay
Look through the avenue of coming years :

I see thee passing without mortal harm
Through ranks of foes against thy safety met ;
I see thee passing, thy defence and charm,
The seal of God upon thy forehead set.

From this time forth thou often shalt hear say
Of what immortal City thou wert given
The rights and full immunities to-day,
And of the hope laid up for thee in heaven :

From this time forward thou shalt not believe
That thou art earthly, or that aught of earth
Or aught that hell can threaten, shall receive
Power on the children of the second birth.

Oh risen out of death into the day
Of an immortal life, we bid thee hail,
And will not kiss the waterdrops away,
The dew that rests upon thy forehead pale.

And if the seed of better life lie long,
As in a wintry hiddenness and death,
Then calling back this day, we will be strong
To wait in hope for heaven's reviving breath ;

To water, if there should be such sad need,
The undiscernëd germ with sorrowing tears,
To wait until from that undying seed
Out of the earth a heavenly plant appears ;

The growth and produce of a fairer land,
And thence transplanted to a barren soil,
It needs the tendance of a careful hand,
Of love, that is not weary with long toil :

And thou, dear child, whose very helplessness
Is as a bond upon us and a claim,
Mayest thou have this of us, as we no less
Have daily from our Father known the same.

TO MY GODCHILD,

ON THE DAY OF HIS BAPTISM.

NO harsh transitions Nature knows,
No dreary spaces intervene ;
Her work in silence forward goes,
And rather felt than seen :

For where the watcher, who with eye
Turned eastward, yet could ever say
When the faint glooming in the sky
First lightened into day ?

Or maiden, by an opening flower
That many a summer morn has stood,
Could fix upon the very hour
It ceased to be a bud ?

The rainbow colours mix and blend
Each with the other, until none
Can tell where fainter hues had end,
And deeper tints begun.

But only doth this much appear—
That the pale hues are deeper grown ;
The day has broken bright and clear ;
The bud is fully blown.

Dear child, and happy shalt thou be,
If from this hour with just increase
All good things shall grow up in thee,
By such unmarked degrees :

If there shall be no dreary space
  Between thy present self and past,
No dreary miserable place
  With spectral shapes against ;

But the full graces of thy prime
  Shall, in their weak beginnings, be
Lost in an unremembered time
  Of holy infancy.

This blessing is the first and best ;
  Yet has not prayer been made in vain
For them, though not so amply blest,
  The lost and found again.

And shouldest thou, alas ! forbear
  To choose the better, nobler lot,
Yet may we not esteem our prayer
  Unheard or heeded not ;

If after many a wandering,
  And many a devious pathway trod,
If having known that bitter thing,
  To leave the Lord thy God ;

It yet shall be, that thou at last,
  Although thy noon be lost, return
To bind life's eve in union fast
  With this, its blessèd morn.

TO AN INFANT SLEEPING.

OH drinking deep of slumber's holy wine,
Whence may the smile that lights thy countenance be
We seek in vain the mystery to divine ;
For in thy dim unconscious infancy
No games as yet, no playfellows are thine,
To stir in waking hours such thoughts of glee,
As, recollected in thine innocent dream,
Might shed across thy face this happy gleam.

It may be, though small notice thou canst take,
Thou feelest that an atmosphere of love
Is ever round thee, sleeping or awake :
Thou wakest, and kind faces from above
Bend o'er thee ; when thou sleepest, for thy sake
All sounds are hushed, and each doth gently move :
And this dim consciousness of tender care
Has caused thy cheek this light of joy to wear.

Or it may be, thoughts deeper than we deem
Visit an infant's slumbers : God is near,
Angels are talking with them in their dream,
Angelic voices whispering sweet and clear :
And round them lies that region's holy gleam,
But newly left, and light which is not here ;
And thus has come that smile upon thy face,
At tidings brought thee from thy native place.

But whatsoe'er the causes which beguiled
That dimple on thy countenance, it is gone ;
Fair is the lake disturbed by ripple mild,
But not less fair when ripple it has none ;

And now what deep repose is thine, dear child,
What smoothness thy unruffled cheek has won !
Oh ! who that gazed upon thee could forbear
The silent breathing of an heart-felt prayer !

TO A FRIEND,

ENTERING THE MINISTRY.

HIGH thoughts at first, and visions high
Are ours of easy victory ;
The word we bear seems so divine,
So framed for Adam's guilty line,
That none, unto ourselves we say,
Of all his sinning suffering race
Will hear that word, so full of grace,
And coldly turn away.

But soon a sadder mood comes round ;
High hopes have fallen to the ground,
And the ambassadors of peace
Go weeping, that men will not cease
To strive with heaven—they inly mourn,
That suffering men will not be blest,
That weary men refuse to rest,
And wanderers to return.

Well is it, if has not ensued
Another, yet unworthier, mood,
When all unfaithful thoughts have way,
When we hang down our hands, and say,
'Alas ! it is a weary pain
To seek with toil and fruitless strife
To chafe the numbed limbs into life,
That will not live again.'

Then if spring odours on the wind
Float by, they bring into our mind
That it were wiser done, to give
Our hearts to nature, and to live
  For her ; or in the student's bower
To search into her hidden things,
And seek in books the wondrous springs
  Of knowledge and of power.

Or if we dare not thus draw back,
Yet oh ! to shun the crowded track
And the rude throng of men ! to dwell
In hermitage or lonely cell,
  Feeding all longings that aspire
Like incense heavenward, and with care
And lonely vigil nursing there
  Faith's solitary pyre.

Oh ! let not us this thought allow—
The heat, the dust upon our brow,
Signs of the contest, we may wear :
Yet thus we shall appear more fair
  In our Almighty Master's eye,
Than if in fear to lose the bloom,
Or ruffle the soul's lightest plume,
  We from the strife should fly.

And for the rest, in weariness,
In disappointment, or distress,
When strength decays, or hope grows dim,
We ever may recur to Him,
  Who has the golden oil divine,
Wherewith to feed our failing urns,
Who watches every lamp that burns
  Before his sacred shrine.

ANTI-GNOSTICUS.

WHO, loving leisure and his studious ease,
And books, and what of noblest lore they bring,
Will not confess that sometimes, called aside
To humbler work and less delightful tasks,
He has been tempted to exclaim in heart—
'How pleasant were it might we only dwell,
And ever hold sweet converse undisturbed
Thus with the choicest spirits of the world
In council, and in letters, and in arms.
Easy to live with, always at command,
They come at bidding, at our word depart,
Friends whose society not ever cloys.
Glorious it were by intercourse with these
To learn whatever men have thought or done,
And travel the great orb of knowledge round.
But oh! how most unwelcome the constraint,
How harsh the summons bidding us to pause,
And for a season turn from our high toils,
From that serener atmosphere come down,
And grow perforce acquainted with the woe,
The strife, the discord of the actual world,
And all the ignoble work beneath the sun.'

These were my thoughts and words the other day
And such they oftentimes have been before,
When I have turned reluctantly, and left
The pleasant labours I had found at home,
For ruder and less grateful tasks abroad,
Which duty would not suffer to put by.
But other feelings occupied my heart,
And other words found utterance from my lips,

When that day's work was finished, and my feet
Again turned homeward—alteration strange
Of feeling, with a better humbler mind.
For I was thankful now, and not alone
That I had been brought under the blue sky,
With winds of heaven to blow upon my cheeks,
And flowers of earth to smile about my feet,
And birds of air to sing within my ears—
Though that were something, something to exchange
Continuous study in a lonely room
For the sweet face of nature, sights and sounds
Of earth and air, restoring influences
Of power to cheer;—yet not for this alone,
Nor for this chiefly; but that thus I was
Compelled, as by a gentle violence,
Not in the pages of dead books alone,
Nor merely in the fair page nature shows,
But in the living page of human life
To look and learn—not merely left to spin
Fine webs and woofs around me like the worm,
Till in mine own coil I had hid myself,
And quite shut out the light of common day,
And common air by which men breathe and live—
That being in a world of sin and woe,
Of woe that might in some part be assuaged,
Of sin that might be lessened in some part,
Heaven in its mercy did not suffer me
To live and dwell wholly apart from these;
Knowing no more of them than men who live
At home in ease, by hearsay know of lands
Which the bold pilgrim has with his own eyes
Seen, with his own feet trod: and now I felt,
It was brought home unto my heart of hearts,
That doom is none more pitiable than his,
Who has created a heart-solitude,
Raised a partition wall to separate

Between himself and any of his kind ;
There was no doom more pitiable than his,
Who at safe distance hears life's stormy waves,
Which break for ever on a rugged shore,
In which are shipwrecked mariners, for their lives
Contending some, some momently sucked up,
But as a gentle murmur afar off
To soothe his sleep, and lull him in his dreams :
Who, while he boasts he has been building up
A palace for himself, in sooth has reared
What shall be first his prison, then his tomb.

And now how different my request and prayer :
Give me, I said, give me a heart that beats
In all its pulses with the common heart
Of humankind, which the same things make glad,
The same make sorry ; give me grace enough
Even in their first beginnings to detect
Endeavours which the proud heart still is making
To cut itself from off the common root,
To set itself upon a private base,
To have wherein to glory of its own,
Beside the common glory of the kind ;
Each such attempt in all its hateful pride
And meanness, give me to detect and loathe,—
A man, and claiming fellowship with men.

I said—Oh ! lead me oftentimes to huts
Where poor men lie, that I may learn the stuff
Which life is made of, its true joys and griefs,
What things are daily bringing grief or joy
Unto the hearts of millions of my race.
Oh ! lead me oft to huts where poor men lie,
Not in the hope fantastical to find
That Innocence, from palaces exiled,
Has taken refuge under sordid roofs ;

But knowing what of evil, what of good
Is to be looked for there, and with firm faith,
That for the eye made wise by charity,
Much good will there as everywhere be found—
Patience by lengthened suffering not outworn,
Promptness to aid in one another's needs,
With self-denial, yea, heroic acts,
The more heroic, as not knowing themselves
For such at all,—and there not seldom too
Such thankfulness for small things, such content
Under the absence of most earthly good,
As might rebuke the pining discontent
That haunts too often rich men's palaces.
These schools of wisdom make me to frequent,
That I may learn what is not learned elsewhere;
What is not to be learned by haunting long
The shady spaces of philosophy;
Lore which even he will fail of, who beside
The streams of *heavenly* wisdom evermore
Is lingering, if he have no purpose there,
Except to gather for his own delight
The bright and beauteous flowers which there are found.

LOVE.

SEEMETH not Love at times so occupied
For thee, as though it cared for none beside?

To great and small things Love alike can reach,
And cares for each as all, and all as each.

Love of my bonds partook, that I might be
In turn partaker of its liberty.

Love found me in the wilderness, at cost
Of painful quests, when I myself had lost.

Love on its shoulders joyfully did lay
Me, weary with the greatness of my way.

Love lit the lamp and swept the house all round,
Till the lost money in the end was found.

Love the King's image there would stamp again,
Effaced in part, and soiled with rust and stain.

'Twas Love, whose quick and ever-watchful eye
The wanderer's first step homeward did espy.

From its own wardrobe Love gave word to bring
What things I needed—shoes, and robe, and ring.

Love threatens that it may not strike ; and still
Unheeded, strikes, that so it may not kill.

Love set me up on high ; when I grew vain
Of that my height, Love brought me down again.

Love often draws good for us from our ill,
Skilful to bless us even against our will.

The bond-servant of Love alone is free ;
All other freedom is but slavery.

How far above all price Love's costly wine,
Which can the meanest chalice make divine !

Fear this effects, that I do not the ill,
Love more—that I thereunto have no will.

Seeds burst not their dark cells without a throe;
All birth is effort; shall not Love's be so?

Love weeps, but from its eyes these two things win
The largest tears—its own, its brother's sin.

The sweetness of the trodden camomile
Is Love's, which, injured, yields more sweets the while.

The heart of Love is with a thousand woes
Pierced, which secure indifference never knows.

The rose aye wears the silent thorn at heart,
And never yet might pain from Love depart.

Once o'er this painful earth a man did move,
The Man of griefs, because the Man of Love.

Hope, Faith, and Love at God's high altar shine,
Lamp triple-branched, and fed with oil divine.

Two of these triple-lights shall once grow pale,
They burn without, but Love within the veil.

Nothing is true but Love, nor aught of worth;
Love is the incense which doth sweeten earth.

O merchant at heaven's mart for heavenly ware,
Love is the only coin which passes there.

The wine of Love can be obtained of none,
Save Him who trod the winepress all alone.

'*REJOICE EVERMORE.*'

BUT how shall we be glad?
We that are journeying through a vale of tears,
Encompassed with a thousand woes and fears,
How should we not be sad?

Angels, that ever stand
Within the presence-chamber, and there raise
The never-interrupted hymn of praise,
May welcome this command:

Or they whose strife is o'er,
Who all their weary length of life have trod,
As pillars now within the temple' of God,
That shall go out no more.

But we who wander here,
We who are exiled in this gloomy place,
Still doomed to water earth's unthankful face
With many a bitter tear—

Bid us lament and mourn,
Bid us that we go mourning all the day,
And we will find it easy to obey,
Of our best things forlorn;

But not that we be glad;
If it be true the mourners are the blest,
Oh leave us in a world of sin, unrest,
And trouble, to be sad.

I spake, and thought to weep,—
For sin and sorrow, suffering and crime,
That fill the world, all mine appointed time
A settled grief to keep.

When lo! as day from night,
As day from out the womb of night forlorn,
So from that sorrow was that gladness born,
Even in mine own despite.

Yet was not that by this
Excluded; at the coming of that joy
Fled not that grief, nor did that grief destroy
The newly-risen bliss:

But side by side they flow,
Two fountains flowing from one smitten heart,
And ofttimes scarcely to be known apart—
That gladness and that woe;

Two fountains from one source,
Or which from two such neighbouring sources run,
That aye for him who shall unseal the one,
The other flows perforce.

And both are sweet and calm,
Fair flowers upon the banks of either blow,
Both fertilize the soil, and where they flow
Shed round them holy balm.

SONNET.

OUR course is onward, onward into light:
What though the darkness gathereth amain,
Yet to return or tarry, both are vain.
How tarry, when around us is thick night?
Whither return? what flower yet ever might,
In days of gloom and cold and stormy rain,
Enfold itself in its green bud again,
Hiding from wrath of tempest out of sight?
Courage—we travel through a darksome cave;
But still as nearer to the light we draw,
Fresh gales will reach us from the upper air,
And wholesome dews of heaven our foreheads lave,
The darkness lighten more, till full of awe
We stand in the open sunshine unaware.

SONNET.

THOU cam'st not to thy place by accident,
It is the very place God meant for thee;
And shouldst thou there small scope for action see,
Do not for this give room to discontent;
Nor let the time thou owest to God be spent
In idly dreaming how thou mightest be,
In what concerns thy spiritual life, more free
From outward hindrance or impediment.
For presently this hindrance thou shalt find
That without which all goodness were a task
So slight, that virtue never could grow strong:
And wouldst thou do one duty to his mind,
The Imposer's—over-burdened thou shalt ask,
And own the need of grace to help, ere long.

SONNET.

WHAT good soever in thy heart or mind
Doth yet no higher source nor fountain own
Than thine own self, nor bow to other throne,
Suspect and fear; although therein thou find
High purpose to go forth and bless thy kind,
Or in the awful temple of thy soul
To worship what is loveliest, and control
The ill within, and by strong laws to bind.
Good is of God—no good is therefore sure,
Which has dared wander from its source away:
Laws without sanction will not long endure,
Love will grow faint and fainter day by day,
And Beauty from the straight path will allure,
And weakening first, will afterwards betray.

SONNET.

A WRETCHED thing it were, to have our heart
Like a thronged highway or a populous street,
Where every idle thought has leave to meet,
Pause, or pass on as in an open mart;
Or like some road-side pool, which no nice art
Has guarded that the cattle may not beat
And foul it with a multitude of feet,
Till of the heavens it can give back no part.
But keep thou thine a holy solitude,
For He who would walk there, would walk alone;
He who would drink there, must be first endued
With single right to call that stream his own;
Keep thou thine heart, close-fastened, unrevealed,
A fencèd garden and a fountain sealed.

SONNET.

WHAT is the greatness of a fallen king?
This—that his fall avails not to abate
His spirit to a level with his fate,
Or inward fall along with it to bring;
That he disdains to stoop his former wing,
But keeps in exile and in want the law
Of kingship yet, and counts it scorn to draw
Comfort indign from any meaner thing.
Soul, that art fallen from thine ancient place,
May'st thou in this mean world find nothing great,
Nor aught that shall the memories efface
Of that true greatness which was once thine own,
As knowing thou must keep thy kingly state,
If thou wouldst reascend thy kingly throne.

SONNET.

TO feel that we are homeless exiles here,
To listen to the world's discordant tone,
As to a private discord of our own,
To know that we are fallen from a sphere
Of higher being, pure, serene, and clear,
Into the darkness of this dim estate—
This thought may sometimes make us desolate,
For this we may shed many a secret tear.
But to mistake our dungeon for a throne,
Our place of exile for our native land,
To hear no discords in the universe,
To find no matter over which to groan,
This (oh! that men would rightly understand!)
This, seeming better, were indeed far worse.

THE HERRING-FISHERS OF LOCHFYNE.

DEEM not these fishers idle, though by day
You hear the snatches of their lazy song,
And see them listlessly the sunlight long
Strew the curved beach of this indented bay:
So deemed I, till I viewed their trim array
Of boats last night,—a busy armament,
With sails as dark as that Athenian bent
Upon his fatal rigging, take their way.
Rising betimes, I could not choose but look
For their return; and when along the lake
The morning mists were curling, saw them make
Homeward, returning toward their quiet nook,
With draggled nets down hanging to the tide,
Weary, and leaning o'er their vessels' side.

IN THE ISLE OF MULL.

THE clouds are gathering in their western dome,
Deep-drenched with sunlight, as a fleece with dew,
While I with baffled effort still pursue
And track these waters toward their mountain home,—
In vain—though cataract, and mimic foam,
And island-spots, round which the streamlet threw
Its sister arms, which joyed to meet anew,
Have lured me on, and won me still to roam;
Till now, coy nymph, unseen thy waters pass,
Or faintly struggle through the twinkling grass,—
And I, thy springs unvisited, return.
Is it that thou art revelling with thy peers?
Or dost thou feed a solitary urn,
Else unreplenished, with thy own sad tears?

THE SAME.

SWEET Water-nymph, more shy than Arethuse,
Why wilt thou hide from me thy green retreat,
Where duly thou with silver-sandalled feet,
And every Naiad, her green locks profuse,
Welcome with dance sad evening, or unloose,
To share your revel, an oak-cinctured throng,
Oread and Dryad, who the daylight long
By rock, or cave, or antique forest, use
To shun the wood-god and his rabble bold?
Such comes not now, or who with impious strife
Would seek to untenant meadow, stream, and plain
Of that indwelling power, which is the life
And which sustaineth each; which poets old
As god and goddess thus have loved to feign.

AT SEA.

THE sea is like a mirror far and near,
And ours a prosperous voyage, safe from harms;
Yet may the thought that everlasting arms
Are round us and about us, be as dear
Now when no sight of danger doth appear,
As though our vessel did its blind way urge
'Mid the long weltering of the dreariest surge,
Through which a perishing bark did ever steer.
Lord of the calm and tempest, be it ours,
Poor mariners! to pay due vows to Thee,
Though not a cloud on all the horizon lowers
Of all our life; for even this way shall we
Have greater boldness toward Thee, when indeed
The storm is up, and there is earnest need.

AN EVENING IN FRANCE.

ONE star is shining in the crimson eve,
And the thin texture of the faint blue sky
Above is like a veil intensely drawn ;
Upon the spirit with a solemn weight
The marvel and the mystery of eve
Is lying, as all holy thoughts and calm,
By the vain stir and tumult of the day
Chased far away, come back on tranquil wing,
Like doves returning to their noted haunts.
It is the solemn even-tide—the hour
Of holy musings, and to us no less
Of sweet refreshment for the bodily frame
Than for the spirit, harassed both and worn
With a long day of travel ; and methinks
It must have been an evening such as this,
After a day of toilsome journeyings o'er,
When looking out on Tiber, as we now
Look out on this fair river flowing by,
Together sat the saintly Monica,
And with her, given unto her prayers, that son,
The turbid stream of whose tumultuous youth
Now first was running smooth and bright and clear :
And solitary sitting in the niche
Of a deep window held delightful talk,
Such as they never could have known before,
Of what must be the glorious life in heaven ;
And looking forth on meadow, stream, and sky,
And on the golden west, that richest glow
Of sunset to the uncreated light,
Which must invest for ever those bright worlds,

Did unto them seem darkness ; and earth's best,
Its dearest pleasures, they with one consent
Counted as vile, nor once to be compared,
Oh ! rather say not worthy to be named,
With what is to be looked for there ; and thus
Leaving behind them all things which are seen,
By many a stately stair they did ascend
Above the earth and all created things,
The sun and starry heavens—yea, and above
The mind of man, until they did attain
Where light no shadow has, and life no death,
Where past or future are not, nor can be,
But an eternal present, and the Lamb
His people feeds from indeficient streams.
Then pausing for a moment, to drink in
That river of delights, at length they cried—
'Oh ! to be thus for ever, and to hear
Thus in the silence of the lower world,
And in the silence of all thoughts that keep
Vain stir within, unutterable words,
And with the splendour of his majesty,
Whose seat is in the middle of the throne,
Thus to be fed for ever—this must be
The beatific vision, the third heaven.
What we have for these passing moments known,
To know the same for ever—this would be
That life whereof even now we held debate :
When will it be ? oh when ?'
These things they said,
And for a season breathed immortal air,
But then perforce returned to earth again,
To this inferior region, while the air
In that empyreal climate is too fine
For our long breathing, who still bear about us
Our gross investiture of mortal weeds.
Yet not for nothing had their spirits flown

To those high regions, bringing back at once
A reconcilement with the mean things here,
And a more earnest longing for what there
Of nobler is by partial glimpses thus
Seen through the crannies of the prison house.
And she, that mother—such entire content
Possessed her bosom, and her Lord had filled
The orb of her desires so round and full,
Had answered all her prayers for her lost son
With such an overmeasure of his grace,—
She had no more to ask, and did not know
Why she should tarry any longer here,
Nor what she did on earth. Thus then she felt,
And to these thoughts which overflowed her heart
Gave thankful utterance meet ; nor many days
After this vision and foretaste of joy,
Inherited the substance of the things
Which she had seen, and entered into peace.

THE DESCENT OF THE RHONE.

OFTEN when my thought has been
Pondering on what sight once seen,
What of all the glorious shows
Nature can at will disclose,
Once beholden, would supply
To the spirit's inward eye
Most unfailing treasures, which
Would the memory most enrich
With its spectacles of power—
It has seemed no ampler dower
Of her sights and solemn shows
She to any would disclose
Than to one, who night and day,
An illimitable way,
Should sail down some mighty river,
Sailing as to sail for ever.

Lo ! my wish is partly won ;
Swiftly flows the stately Rhone ;
And we loosen from the shore
Our light pinnace, long before
The young East in gorgeous state
Has unlocked his ruby gate,
And our voyage is not done
At the sinking of the sun ;
But for us the azure Night
Feeds her golden flocks with light :
All the changeful hues of heaven,
Sights and sounds of morn and even,
All unto our eyes are given.

In our view the day is born ;
First the stars of lustre shorn,
Then o'er heaven faint bloom is spread,
And the clouds blush deeper red,
Till from them the stream below
Catches the same roseate glow ;
Lightens the pale east to gold,
And the west is with the fold
Of the mantle of dim night
Scarcely darkened or less bright—
Till, his way prepared, at length
Rising giantlike in strength,
Tramples the victorious sun
The dying stars out, one by one.

Fairer scene the opening eye
Of the day can scarce descry,
Fairer sight he looks not on
Than the pleasant banks of Rhone ;
Where in terraces and ranks,
On those undulating banks,
Rise by many a hilly stair
Sloping tiers of vines, where'er
From the steep and stony soil
Has been won by careful toil,
And with long laborious pains
Fenced against the washing rains,
Fenced and anxiously walled round,
Some small patch of garden ground.
Higher still some place of power,
Or a solitary tower,
Ruined now, is looking down
On the quiet little town
In a sheltered glen beneath,
Where the smoke's unbroken wreath

Mounting in the windless air,
Rests, dissolving slowly there,
O'er the housetops like a cloud,
Or a thinnest vaporous shroud.

Morn has been, and lo ! how soon
Has arrived the middle noon,
And the broad sun's rays do rest
On some naked mountain's breast,
Where alone relieve the eye
Massive shadows, as they lie
In the hollows motionless ;
Still our boat doth onward press :
Now a peaceful current wide
Bears it on an ample tide,
Now the hills retire, and then
Their broad fronts advance again,
Till the rocks have closed us round,
And would seem our course to bound,
But anon a path appears,
And our vessel onward steers,
Darting rapidly between
Narrow walls of a ravine.

Morn has been and noon—and now
Evening falls about our prow :
'Mid the clouds that kindling won
Light and fire from him, the Sun
For a moment's space was lying,
Phœnix in his own flames dying !
And a sunken splendour still
Glows behind the western hill ;
Lo ! the starry troop again
Gather on the ethereal plain ;
Even now and there were none,
And a moment since but one ;

And anon we lift our head,
And all heaven is overspread
With a still assembling crowd,
With a silent multitude—
Vesper, first and brightest set
In the night's fair coronet,
Armed Orion's belted pride,
And the Seven that by the side
Of the Titan nightly weave
Dances in the mystic eve,
Sisters linked in love and light.
'Twere in truth a solemn sight,
Were we sailing now as they,
Who upon their western way
To the isles of spice and gold,
Nightly watching, might behold
These our constellations dip,
And the great sign of the Ship
Rise upon the other hand,
With the Cross, aye seen to stand
In the vault of heaven upright,
At the middle hour of night—
Or with them whose keels first prest
The huge rivers of the west,
Who the first with bold intent
Down the Orellana went,
Or a dangerous progress won
On the mighty Amazon,
By whose ocean-streams they told
Of the warrior-maidens bold.

But the fancy may not roam ;
Thou wilt keep it nearer home,
Friend, of earthly friends the best,
Who on this fair river's breast

Sailest with me fleet and fast,
As the unremitting blast
With a steady breath and strong
Urges our light bark along.
We this day have found delight
In each pleasant sound and sight
Of this river bright and fair,
And in things which flowing are
Like a stream ; yet without blame
These my passing song may claim,
Or thy hearing may beguile,
If we not forget the while,
That we are from childhood's morn
On a mightier river borne,
Which is rolling evermore
To a sea without a shore,
Life the river, and the sea
That we seek—eternity.
We may sometimes sport and play,
And in thought keep holiday,
So we ever own a law,
Living in habitual awe,
And beneath the constant stress
Of a solemn thoughtfulness,
Weighing whither this life tends,
For what high and holy ends
It was lent us, whence it flows,
And its current whither goes.

There is ample matter here
For as much of thought and fear
As will solemnize our souls—
Thought of how this river rolls
Over millions wrecked before
They could reach that happy shore,

Where we have not anchored yet ;
Of the dangers which beset
Our own way, of hidden shoal,
Waters smoothest where they roll
Over point of sunken rock,
Treacherous calm, and sudden shock
Of the storm, which can assail
No boat than ours more weak or frail—
Matter not alone of sadness,
But no less of thankful gladness,
That, whichever way we turn,
There are steady lights that burn
On the shore, and lamps of love
In the gloomiest sky above,
Which will guide our bark aright
Through the darkness of our night—
Many a fixed unblinking star
Unto them that wandering are
Through this blindly-weltering sea—
Themes of high and thoughtful glee,
When we think we are not left,
Of all solaces bereft,
Each to hold, companionless,
Through a pathless wilderness,
Unaccompanied our way,
All forlorn ; this I may say,
Whatsoever else betide,
With thee sitting at my side,
And this happy infant sweet,
Playing, laughing at my feet.

LINES

WRITTEN AT THE VILLAGE OF PASSIGNANO, ON THE LAKE OF THRASYMENE.

THE mountains stand about the quiet lake,
That not a breath its azure calm may break ;
No leaf of these sere olive-leaves is stirred ;
In the near silence far-off sounds are heard ;
The tiny bat is flitting over-head,
The hawthorn doth its richest odours shed
Into the dewy air ; and over all,
Veil after veil, the evening shadows fall,
Withdrawing one by one each glimmering height,
The far, and then the nearer, from our sight—
No sign surviving in this tranquil scene,
That strife and savage tumult here have been.

But if the pilgrim to the latest plain
Of carnage, where the blood like summer rain
Fell but the other day—if in his mind
He marvels much and oftentimes to find
With what rare art has Nature each sad trace
Of Man's red footmarks laboured to efface—
What wonder, if this spot we tread appears
Guiltless of strife, when now two thousand years
Of daily reparation have gone by,
Since it resumed its own tranquillity !
This calm has nothing strange ; yet not the less
This holy evening's solemn quietness,
The perfect beauty of this windless lake,
This stillness which no louder murmurs break
Than the frogs croaking from the distant sedge,
These vineyards drest unto the water's edge,

This hind that homeward driving the slow steer
Tells how man's daily work goes forward here,
Have each a power upon me, while I drink
The influence of the placid time, and think
How gladly that sweet Mother once again
Resumes her sceptre and benignant reign,
But for a few short instants scared away
By the mad game, the cruel impious fray
Of her distempered children—how comes back,
And leads them in the customary track
Of blessing once again ; to order brings
Anew the dislocated frame of things,
And covers up, and out of sight conceals
What they have wrought of ill, or gently heals.

TO ENGLAND.

WRITTEN AFTER A VISIT TO SORRENTO.

THEY are but selfish visions at the best,
Which tempt us to desire that we were free
From the dear ties that bind us unto thee,
That so we might take up our lasting rest,
Where some delightful spot, some hidden nest
In brighter lands has pleased our phantasy :
And might such vows at once accomplished be,
We should not in the accomplishment be blest,
But oh ! most miserable, if it be true
Peace only waits upon us, while we do
Heaven's work and will : for what is it we ask,
When we would fain have leave to linger here,
But to abandon our appointed task,
Our place of duty and our natural sphere ?

SORRENTO.

A FRAGMENT.

FAIR fountains of man's art were there,
Streams trickling down from stair to stair,
And as, with lapse just audible,
From font to font the waters fell,
Around the lighted bubbles flew,
Starring the leaves with points like dew :
For tender myrtles near were set,
That in this happy clime had met
Unhoused the winter's deadliest air ;
And the pale lemon-flower was there,
And the dark glittering leaves behind
The fruit with its discoloured rind :
While the long groves of orange made
A screen sun-proof, an ample shade,
With spacious avenues below,
Where one might wander to and fro,
Watching the little runnels creep
Round every root, and duly steep
With freshness all the thirsty soil ;
Or lift a hand for easiest spoil,
And of the golden fruitage share,
Cool-hanging in the morning air.

VESUVIUS.

(AS SEEN FROM CAPRI.)

A WREATH of light blue vapour, pure and rare,
Mounts, scarcely seen against the bluer sky,
In quiet adoration, silently—
Till the faint currents of the upper air
Dislimn it, and it forms, dissolving there,
The dome, as of a palace, hung on high
Over the mountain ; underneath it lie
Vineyards and bays and cities white and fair.
Might we not think this beauty would engage
All living things unto one pure delight?
Oh vain belief ! for here our records tell,
Rome's understanding tyrant from men's sight
Hid, as within a guilty citadel,
The shame of his dishonourable age.

VESUVIUS.

AS when unto a mother, having chid
Her child in anger, there have straight ensued
Repentings for her quick and angry mood,
Till she would fain see all its traces hid
Quite out of sight—even so has Nature bid
Fair flowers, that on the scarred earth she has strewed,
To blossom, and called up the taller wood
To cover what she ruined and undid.
Oh ! and her mood of anger did not last
More than an instant ; but her work of peace,
Restoring and repairing, comforting
The earth, her stricken child, will never cease ;
For that was her strange work, and quickly past,
To this her genial toil no end the years shall bring.

THE SAME.

CONTINUED.

THAT her destroying fury was with noise
And sudden uproar; but far otherwise,
With silent and with secret ministries,
Her skill of renovation she employs:
For Nature, only loud when she destroys,
Is silent when she fashions: she will crowd
The work of her destruction, transient, loud,
Into an hour, and then long peace enjoys.
Yea, every power that fashions and upholds
Works silently; all things whose life is sure,
Their life is calm; silent the light that moulds
And colours all things; and without debate
The stars, which are for ever to endure,
Assume their thrones and their unquestioned state.

ON THE PERSEUS AND MEDUSA

OF BENVENUTO CELLINI, AT FLORENCE.

IN what fierce spasms upgathered, on the plain
Medusa's headless corpse has quivering sunk,
While all the limbs of that undying trunk
To their extremest joint with torture strain;
But the calm visage has resumed again
Its beauty,—the orbed eyelids are let down,
As though a living sleep might once more crown
Their placid circlets, guiltless of all pain.
And thou—is thine the spirit's swift recoil,
Which follows every deed of acted wrath,
That, holding in thine hand this loveliest spoil,
Thou dost not triumph, feeling that the breath
Of life is sacred, whether it inform,
Loathly or beauteous, man or beast or worm?

LINES

WRITTEN AFTER HEARING SOME BEAUTIFUL SINGING IN A CONVENT CHURCH AT ROME.

SWEET voices ! seldom mortal ear
Strains of such potency might hear ;
My soul that listened seemed quite gone,
Dissolved in sweetness, and anon
I was borne upward, till I trod
Among the hierarchy of God.
And when they ceased, as time must bring
An end to every sweetest thing,
With what reluctancy came back
My spirits to their wonted track,
And how I loathed the common life,
The daily and recurring strife
With petty sins, the lowly road,
And being's ordinary load.
—Why, after such a solemn mood
Should any meaner thought intrude?
Why will not heaven hereafter give,
That we for evermore may live
Thus at our spirit's topmost bent?
So asked I in my discontent.

But give me, Lord, a wiser heart ;
These seasons come, and they depart,
These seasons, and those higher still,
When we are given to have our fill
Of strength and life and joy with Thee,
And brightness of thy face to see.
They come, or we could never guess
Of heaven's sublimer blessedness ;

They come, to be our strength and cheer
In other times, in doubt or fear,
Or should our solitary way
Lie through the desert many a day.
They go, they leave us blank and dead,
That we may learn, when they are fled,
We are but vapours which have won
A moment's brightness from the sun,
And which it may at pleasure fill
With splendour, or unclothe at will.
Well for us they do not abide,
Or we should lose ourselves in pride,
And be as angels—but as they
Who on the battlements of day
Walked, gazing on their power and might,
Till they grew giddy in their height.

Then welcome every nobler time.
When out of reach of earth's dull chime
'Tis ours to drink with purgëd ears
The music of the solemn spheres,
Or in the desert to have sight
Of those enchanted cities bright,
Which sensual eye can never see:
Thrice welcome may such seasons be:
But welcome too the common way,
The lowly duties of the day,
And all which makes and keeps us low,
Which teaches us ourselves to know,
That we who do our lineage high
Draw from beyond the starry sky,
Are yet upon the other side
To earth and to its dust allied.

A VISIT TO TUSCULUM.

A SOLEMN thing it is, and full of awe,
Wandering long time among the lonely hills,
To issue on a sudden 'mid the wrecks
Of some fall'n city, as might seem a coast
From which the tide of life has ebbed away,
Leaving bare sea-marks only. Such there lie
Among the Alban mountains—Tusculum,
Or Palestrina with Cyclopean walls
Enormous : and this solemn awe we felt
And knew this morning, when we stood among
What of that first-named city yet survives.
For we had wandered long among those hills,
Watching the white goats on precipitous heights,
Half-hid among the bushes, or their young
Tending new-yeaned : and we had paused to hear
The deep-toned music of the convent bells,
And wound through many a verdant forest path,
Gathering the crocus and anemone,
With that fresh gladness, which when flowers are new
In the first spring, they bring us ; till at last
We issued out upon an eminence,
Commanding prospect large on every side,—
But largest where the world's great City lay,
Whose features, undistinguishable now,
Allowed no recognition, save where the eye
Could mark the white front of the Lateran
Facing this way, or rested on the dome,
The broad stupendous dome, high over all.
And as a sea around an island's roots
Spreads, so the level champaign every way

Stretched round the City, level all, and green
With the new vegetation of the spring ;
Nor by the summer ardours scorched as yet,
Which shot from southern suns, too soon dry up
The beauty and the freshness of the plains ;
While to the right the ridge of Apennine,
Its higher farther summits all snow-crowned,
Rose, with white clouds above them, as might seem
Another range of more aërial hills.

These things were at a distance, but more near
And at our feet signs of the tide of life,
That once was here, and now had ebbed away—
Pavements entire, without one stone displaced,
Where yet there had not rolled a chariot wheel
For many hundred years ; rich cornices,
Elaborate friezes of rare workmanship,
And broken shafts of columns, that along
This highway side lay prone ; vaults that were rooms
And hollowed from the turf, and cased in stone,
Seats and gradations of a theatre,
Which, emptied of its population now,
Shall never be refilled : and all these things,
Memorials of the busy life of man,
Or of his ample means for pomp and pride,
Scattered among the solitary hills,
And lying open to the sun and showers,
And only visited at intervals
By wandering herds, or pilgrims like ourselves
From distant lands ; with now no signs of life,
Save where the goldfinch built his shallow nest
'Mid the low bushes, or where timidly
The rapid lizard glanced between the stones—
All saying that the fashion of this world
Passes away : that not Philosophy

Nor Eloquence can guard their dearest haunts
From the rude touch of desecrating time.
What marvel, when the very fanes of God,
The outward temples of the Holy One,
Claim no exemption from the general doom,
But lie in ruinous heaps; when nothing stands,
Nor may endure to the end, except alone
The spiritual temple built with living stones?

GIBRALTAR.

ENGLAND, we love thee better than we know—
And this I learned, when after wanderings long
'Mid people of another stock and tongue,
I heard again thy martial music blow,
And saw thy gallant children to and fro
Pace, keeping ward at one of those huge gates,
Twin giants watching the Herculean Straits.
When first I came in sight of that brave show,
It made my very heart within me dance,
To think that thou thy proud foot shouldst advance
Forward so far into the mighty sea;
Joy was it and exultation to behold
Thine ancient standard's rich emblazonry,
A glorious picture by the wind unrolled.

ON A PICTURE AT MADRID.

BY MURILLO.

WITH what calm power thou risest on the wind ;
Mak'st thou a pinion of those locks unshorn?
Or of that dark blue robe which floats behind
In ample folds? or art thou cloud-upborne?

A crescent moon is bent beneath thy feet,
Above the heavens expand, and tier o'er tier
With heavenly garlands thy advance to greet,
The cloudy throng of cherubim appear.

There is a glory round thee, and mine eyes
Are dazzled, for I know not whence it came,
Since never in the light of western skies
The island-clouds burned with so pure a flame :

Nor were those flowers of our dull common mould,
But nurtured on some amaranthine bed,
Nearer the sun, remote from storms and cold,
By purer dews and warmer breezes fed.

Well may we be perplexed and sadly wrought,
That we can guess so ill what dreams were thine,
Ere from the chambers of thy silent thought
That face looked out on thee, Painter divine.

What innocence, what love, what loveliness,
What purity must have familiar been
Unto thy soul, before it could express
The holy beauty in that visage seen !

And so, if we would understand thee right,
And the diviner portion of thine art,
We must exalt our spirits to thine height,
Nor wilt thou else the mystery impart.

A LEGEND OF ALHAMBRA.

O HYMNED in many a poet's strain,
Alhambra, by enchanter's hand
Exalted on this throne of Spain,
A marvel of the land;

The last of thy imperial race,
Alhambra, when he overstept
Thy portal's threshold, turned his face,
He turned his face and wept.

In sooth it was a thing to weep,
If then, as now, the level plain
Beneath was spreading like the deep,
The broad unruffled main:

If, like a watch-tower of the sun,
Above the Alpujarras rose,
Streaked, when the dying day was done,
With evening's roseate snows.

Thy founts yet make a pleasant sound,
And the twelve lions, couchant yet,
Sustain their ponderous burden, round
The marble basin set.

But never, when the moon is bright
O'er hill and golden-sanded stream,
And thy square turrets in the light
And taper columns gleam,

Will village maiden dare to fill
Her pitcher from that basin wide,
But rather seeks a niggard rill
Far down the steep hill-side!

It was an Andalusian maid,
With rose and pink-enwoven hair,
Who told me what the fear that stayed
Their footsteps from that stair :

How, rising from that watery floor,
A Moorish maiden, in the gleam
Of the wan moonlight, stands before
The stirrer of the stream :

And mournfully she begs the grace,
That they would speak the words divine,
And, sprinkling water in her face,
Would make the sacred sign.

And whosoe'er will grant this boon,
Returning with the morrow's light,
Shall find the fountain-pavement strewn
With gold and jewels bright :

A regal gift ! for once, they say,
Her father ruled this broad domain,
The last who kept beneath his sway
This pleasant place of Spain.

It surely is a fearful doom,
That one so beautiful should have
No present quiet in her tomb,
No hope beyond the grave.

It must be that some amulet
Doth make all human pity vain,
Or that upon her brow is set
The silent seal of pain,

Which none can meet—else long ago,
Since many gentle hearts are there,
Some spirit, touched by joy or woe,
Had answered to her prayer.

But so it is, that till this hour
That mournful child beneath the moon
Still rises from her watery bower,
To urge this simple boon—

To beg, as all have need of grace,
That they would speak the words divine,
And, sprinkling water in her face,
Would make the sacred sign.

SONNET.

IT may be that our homeward longings made
That other lands were judged with partial eyes;
But fairer in my sight the mottled skies,
With pleasant interchange of sun and shade,
And more desired the meadow and deep glade
Of sylvan England, green with frequent showers,
Than all the beauty which the vaunted bowers
Of the parched South have in mine eyes displayed;
Fairer and more desired !—this well might be,
For let the South have beauty's utmost dower,
And yet my heart might well have turned to thee,
My home, my country, when a delicate flower
Within thy pleasant borders was for me
Tended, and growing up through sun and shower.

RECOLLECTICNS OF BURGOS.

MOST like some agëd king it seemed to me,
Who had survived his old regality,
Poor and deposed, but keeping still his state
In all he had before of truly great ;
With no vain wishes and no vain lament,
But his enforcëd leisure well content
To soothe with meditation, books and prayer :
For all was sober and majestic there—
The old Castilian, with close finger tips
Pressing his folded mantle to his lips ;
The dim cathedral's cross-surmounted pile,
With carved recess, and cool and shadowy aisle,
The walks of poplar by the river's side,
That wound by many a straggling channel wide ;
And seats of stone, where one might sit and weave
Visions, till well-nigh tempted to believe
That life had few things better to be done,
And many worse, than sitting in the sun
To lose the hours, and wilfully to dim
Our half-shut eyes, and veil them till might swim
The pageant by us, smoothly as the stream
And unremembered pageant of a dream.

A castle crowned a neighbouring hillock's crest,
But now the moat was level with the rest ;
And all was fallen of this place of power,
All heaped with formless stone, save one round tower
And here and there a gateway low and old,
Figured with antique shape of warrior bold.
And then behind this eminence the sun
Would drop serenely, long ere day was done ;
And one who climbed that height, might see again
A second setting o'er the fertile plain
Beyond the town, and glittering in his beam,
Wind far away that poplar-skirted stream.

A LEGEND OF TOLEDO.

FAR down below the Christian captives pine
In dungeon depths, and whoso dares to bring
Assuagements for their wounds, or food, or wine,
Must brave the fiercest vengeance of the king.

Richly is spread above the royal board,
The palace windows blaze with festal light,
And many a lady, many a Moorish lord,
The morning's triumph celebrate at night.

But could they all without remorse or fear
Feast, as although on earth were to be found
No hunger to appease, no want to cheer,
No dark and hopeless places underground?

Neither of knight or captain is it told
That he was shamed at heart to do this thing
One only was there, pitiful and bold—
A maiden, daughter of this impious king.

Three times the beauteous messenger of grace
She, passing to the dungeon from the hall,
Shone like an angel in that gloomy place,
And brought relief to some, and hope to all.

But envious eyes were on her, and her sire,
Upon her way encountering unawares
Her passing thither the fourth time, in ire
Bid show what hidden in her lap she bears.

Thus, willing to condemn her in the sight
Of all, he spake : she tremblingly obeyed,
When, if old legends speak the truth aright,
Flowers filled her lap,—these only it displayed :

Roses and pinks and lilies there were found,
Marvel to her and them who saw the same ;
All sweetest flowers that grow from earthly ground,
But nothing that might bring rebuke or blame.

Whate'er is sown in love—the lowliest deed—
Shall bloom and be a flower in Paradise ;
Yet springs not often from that precious seed
Harvest so prompt as this before our eyes.

But afterward how rescued from the court,
And from a faith which cannot save or bless,
To far-off hermitage she made resort,
A saintly dweller in the wilderness,

Her story, pictured on a cloister wall
In old Toledo, gives us not to know :
This only there appears, and this is all
We need to ask, whether of weal or woe—

That unto her who was in mercy bold,
Was given the knowledge of a faith divine :
For there in death we see her, and her hold
Is on the Cross, salvation's blessëd sign.

AN INCIDENT VERSIFIED.

FAR in the south there is a jutting ledge
Of rocks, scarce peering o'er the water's edge,
Where earliest come the fresh Atlantic gales,
That in their course have filled a thousand sails,
And brushed for leagues and leagues the Atlantic deep,
Till now they make the nimble spirit leap
Beneath their lifeful and renewing breath,
And stir it like the ocean depths beneath.
Two that were strangers to that sunny land,
And to each other, met upon this strand;
One seemed to keep so slight a hold of life,
That when he willed, without the spirit's strife,
He might let go—not as sometimes we see
Lean o'er a precipice an agëd tree,
Whose gnarlëd roots grow barer day by day,
For aye the strong rains falling wash away
Some portion of the black and scanty mould
That clung around them; yet they keep their hold,
And like a dead man's fingers seem to clasp
The bare earth with an agonizing grasp—
He rather was a flower upon a ledge
Of verdant meadow by a river's edge,
Which softly loosens with its treacherous flow
In gradual lapse the moistened soil below;
While to the last in beauty and in bloom
That flower is scattering incense o'er its tomb,
And with the dews upon it, and the breath
Of the fresh morning round it, sinks to death.
They met the following day, and many more
They paced together this low ridge of shore,
Till one fair eve, the other with intent
To lure him out, unto his chamber went;

But straight retired again with noiseless pace,
For with a subtle gauze flung o'er his face
Upon his bed he lay, serene and still
And quiet, even as one who takes his fill
Of a delight he does not fear to lose.
So blest he seemed, the other could not choose
To wake him, but went down the narrow stair;
And when he met an aged attendant there,
She ceased her work to tell him, when he said,
Her patient then on happy slumber fed,
But that anon he would return once more,—
Her inmate had expired an hour before.

I know not by what chance he thus was thrown
On a far shore, untended and alone,
To live or die; for as I after learned,
There were in England many hearts that yearned
To know his safety, and such tears were shed
For him as grace the living and the dead.

SONNET.

THE commonest spot we cannot without pain
Turn from, where we have tarried but a day,
And struck no roots, when to our hearts we say,
We ne'er shall look upon this spot again;
What wonder then if I can not restrain
Some sadness, turning from these haunts away,
Where we have many a month been free to stray
By verdant stream, o'er hill or pleasant plain—
A momentary sadness, yet which brings
Thanksgiving with it, gratitude for this,
That where we live, we cannot choose but love;
We make a friend of nature, until bliss
(Few guess how much), we daily, hourly prove
From the known aspect of familiar things.

ON LEAVING ROME.

ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND RESIDING IN THAT CITY.

O LATELY written in the roll of friends,
O written late, not last, three happy months
Under the shadow of the Capitol,
A pleasant time, made pleasanter by thee,
It has been mine to live—three months of spring,
Which pleasant in themselves and for thy sake,
Had yet this higher, that they stirred in the heart
The motions of continual thankfulness
For me, considering by what gracious paths
I had been guided, by what paths of love,
Since I was last a dweller in these gates.
That meditation could not prove to me
But as a spring that ever bubbles up,
Sparkling in the face of heaven, while every day
Reminded me how little of delight
I gathered from this wondrous city then,
But what a rare and ample gladness now.

For though not then indifferent to me
Nature or Art, yea rather though from these
I drew whatever lightened for a while
Life's burden and intolerable load ;
Yet seldom could I gather heart enough,
With all their marvels round me, to go forth
In quest of any. But some lonely spot,
Some ridge of ruin fringed with cypresses,
Such as have everywhere so loved to make
Their chosen home, more than all other trees,
'Mid the fall'n structures of imperial Rome,
Me did such haunt please better ; or I loved,

With others whom a like disquietude,
At the like crisis of their lives, now kept
Restless, with them to question to and fro
And to debate the evil of the world,
As though we bore no portion of that ill,
As though with subtle phrases we could spin
A woof to screen us from life's undelight :
Sometimes prolonging far into the night
Such talk, as loth to separate, and find
Each in his solitude how vain are words,
When that which is opposed to them is more.

I would not live that time again for worlds,
Full of rebellious askings, for what end,
And by what power, without our own consent,
Caught in this snare of life we knew not how,
We were placed here, to suffer and to sin,
To be in misery and know not why.
Yet so it fared with me, a sojourner,
Five years ago, beneath these mouldering walls,
As I am now ; and, trusted friend, to thee
I have not doubted to reveal my soul,
For thou hast known, if I may read aright
The pages of thy past existence, thou
Hast known the dreary sickness of the soul,
Which falls upon us in our lonely youth,
The fear of all bright visions leaving us,
The sense of emptiness, without the sense
Of an abiding fulness anywhere ;
When all the generations of mankind,
With all their purposes, their hopes and fears,
Seem nothing truer than those wandering shapes
Cast by a trick of light upon a wall,
And nothing different from these, except
In their capacity for suffering ;—
That fearful moment of our youth, when first

We have the sense of sin, and none as yet
Of expiation. Our own life seemed then
But as an arrow flying in the dark
Without an aim; a most unwelcome gift,
Which we might not put by.
But now, what God
Intended as a blessing and a boon
We have received as such; and we can say
A solemn yet a joyful thing is life,
Which, being full of duties, is for this
Of gladness full, and ful of lofty hopes.
And He has taught us what reply to make
Or secretly in spirit, or in words,
If there be need, when sorrowing men complain
The fair illusions of their youth depart,
All things are going from them, and to-day
Is emptier of delights than yesterday,
Even as to-morrow will be barer yet;
We have been taught to feel this need not be,
This is not life's inevitable law,—
But that the gladness we are called to know,
Is an increasing gladness; that the soil
Of the human heart, tilled rightly, will become
Richer and deeper, fitter to bear fruit
Of an immortal growth, from day to day,
Fruit of love, life, and indeficient joy.

Oh! not for baneful self-complacency,
Not for the setting up our present selves
To triumph o'er our past (worst pride of all),
May we compare this present with that past;
But to provoke renewed acknowledgments,
But to incite unto an earnest hope
For all our brethren. And how should I fear
To own to thee that this is in my heart,
This longing—that it leads me home to-day,

Glad even while I turn my back on Rome,
Yet half unseen—its arts, its memories,
Its glorious fellowship of living men ;
Glad in the hope to tread the soil again
Of England, where our place of duty lies :—
Yet not as though we deemed we could do much,
Or claimed large sphere of action for ourselves ;
Not in this thought—since rather be it ours,
Both thine and mine, to ask for that calm frame
Of spirit, in which we know and deeply feel
How little is the most which we can do,
Yet leave not so that little unfulfilled.

RETURNING HOME.

TO leave unseen so many a glorious sight,
To leave so many lands unvisited,
To leave so many worthiest books unread,
Unrealized so many visions bright ;—
Oh ! wretched yet inevitable spite
Of our brief span, that we must yield our breath,
And wrap us in the unfeeling coil of death,
So much remaining of unproved delight.
But hush, my soul, and vain regrets, be stilled ;
Find rest in Him who is the complement
Of whatsoe'er transcends our mortal doom,
Of baffled hope and unfulfilled intent ;
In the clear vision and aspèct of whom
All longings and all hopes shall be fulfilled.

LINES.

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF THE ADORATION OF THE MAGIANS.

LITTLE pomp or earthly state
On his lowly steps might wait ;
Few the homages and small,
That the guilty earth at all
Was permitted to accord
To her King and hidden Lord :
Therefore do we set more store
On these few, and prize them more :
Dear to us for this account
Is the glory of the Mount,
When bright beams of light did spring
Through the sackcloth covering,
Rays of glory forced their way
Through the vesture of decay,
With which, as with a cloak, He had
His divinest splendour clad :
Dear the lavish ointment shed
On his feet and sacred head ;
And the high-raised hopes sublime,
And the triumph of the time,
When through Zion's streets the way
Of her peaceful conqueror lay,
Who, fulfilling ancient fame,
Meek and with salvation came.

But of all this scanty state
That upon his steps might wait,
Dearest are these Eastern Kings,
With their far-brought offerings.

From what region of the morn
Are ye come, thus travel-worn,
With those boxes pearl-embossed,
Caskets rare and gifts of cost?
While your swart attendants wait
At the stable's outer gate,
And the camels lift their head
High above the lowly shed;
Or are seen a long-drawn train,
Winding down into the plain,
From beyond the light-blue line
Of the hills in distance fine.
Dear for your own sake, whence are ye?
Dearer for the mystery
That is round you?—on what skies
Gazing, saw you first arise
Through the darkness that clear star
Which has marshalled you so far,
Even unto this strawy tent,
Dancing up the Orient?
Shall we name you Kings indeed,
Or is this an idle creed?—
Kings of Seba, with the gold
And the incense long foretold?
Would the Gentile world by you
First-fruits pay of tribute due;
Or have Israel's scattered race,
From their unknown hiding-place,
Sent to claim their part and right
In the Child new-born to-night?

But although we may not guess
Of your lineage, not the less
We the self-same gifts would bring,
For a spiritual offering.

May the frankincense, in air
As it climbs, instruct our prayer,
That it ever upward tend,
Ever struggle to ascend,
Leaving earth, yet ere it go
Fragrance rich diffuse below.
As the myrrh is bitter-sweet,
So in us may such things meet,
As unto the mortal taste
Bitter seeming, yet at last
Shall to them who try be known
To have sweetness of their own—
Tears for sin, which sweeter far
Than the world's mad laughters are ;
Desires, that in their dying give
Pain, but die that we may live.
And the gold from Araby—
Fitter symbol who could see
Of the love, which, thrice refined,
Love to God and to our kind,
Duly tendered, He will call
Choicest sacrifice of all ?

Thus so soon as, far apart
From the proud world, in our heart,
As in stable dark defiled,
There is born the Eternal Child,
May to Him the spirit's kings
Yield their choicest offerings ;
May Affections, Reason, Will,
Wait upon Him to fulfil
His behests, and early pay
Homage to his natal day.

TO SILVIO PELLICO.

ON READING THE STORY OF HIS IMPRISONMENT.

AH ! who may guess, that yet was never tried,
How fearful the temptation to reply
With wrong for wrong, yea fiercely to defy
In spirit, even though action is denied ?
Therefore praise waits on thee, not drawn aside
By this strong lure of hell—on thee, whose eye
Being formed by love, could everywhere descry
Love, or some workings unto love allied.
And benediction on the grace that dealt
So with thy soul—and prayer, more earnest prayer,
Intenser longing than before we felt
For all that in dark places lying are,
For captives in strange lands, for them who pine
In depth of dungeon, or in sunless mine.

TO THE SAME.

SONGS of deliverance compassed thee about,
Long ere thy prison doors were backward flung ;
When first thy heart to gentle thoughts was strung,
A song arose in heaven, an angel shout
For one delivered from the hideous rout,
Who with defiance and fierce mutual hate
Do each the other's griefs exasperate.
Thou, loving, from thy grief hadst taken out
Its worst—for who is captive or a slave
But he, who from that dungeon and foul grave,
His own dark soul, refuses to come forth
Into the light and liberty above ?
Or whom may we call wretched on this earth
Save only him who has left off to love ?

TASSO'S DUNGEON, FERRARA.

HOW might the goaded sufferer in this cell,
With nothing upon which his eyes might fall,
Except this vacant court, that dreary wall,
How might he live? I asked. Here doomed to dwell,
I marvel how at all he could repel
Thoughts which to madness and despair would call.
Enter this vault—the bare sight will appal
Thy spirit, even as mine within me fell,—
Until I learned that wall not always there
Had stood—'twas something that this iron grate
Had once looked out upon a garden fair.
There must have been then here, to calm his brain,
Green leaves, and flowers, and sunshine;—and a weight
Fell from me, and my heart revived again.

IN THE TYROL.

NO village here so lowly, but hard by
With its green cupola or tapering spire,
Which sunset touches with innocuous fire,
The little church appears, to sanctify
The precincts duly where men live and die—
A middle point, a link connecting well
The earthly habitations where men dwell
With ever-during mansions in the sky.
Why must this fair sight aught but gladness breed
Why must we ask, the while well satisfied
Both eye and heart upon this prospect feed,—
When shall we see arise on every side
In our great cities populous and wide,
Temples among us, answering our new need?

AT BRUNECKEN, IN THE TYROL.

THE men who for this earthly life would claim
Well nigh the whole, and if the work of heaven
Be relegated to one day in seven,
Account the other six may without blame,
Unsanctified by one diviner aim,
To self, to mammon, and the world be given,
They with their scanty worship might be driven,
Were they but here, to profitable shame.
This eve, the closing of no festal day,
This common work-day eve, in the open street
Seen have we groups of happy people meet,
Putting for this their toil and tasks away,
Men, women, boys, at one rude shrine to pray,
And there their fervent litanies repeat.

TO THE TYROLESE.

NOT merely that in you was proved the might
Of men, who standing on their native soil,
Resolve it shall not be an easy spoil,
Do I with triumph and with heart's delight
Recall your deeds here done in hardy fight—
Nor that ye caught the hunter in the toil,
A miserable prey ! and made recoil
The hosts of France with loss and hideous flight :
But that ye teach a holier lesson still,
But that in you and in your foe were showed
The strength, the courage, the enduring will,
The glory of the men who lean on God ;
The blindness, the defeat, the panic fear
Of them whose only trust is in their sword and spear.

A RECOLLECTION OF THE TYROL.

TO ——.

A LITTLE chapel by a dusty way,
A holy precinct yielding silently
Due admonition to each passer by,
That in all times and places men should pray,
And hallow like a sabbath every day—
Even such an one now haunts my memory,
One of the many that once pleased our eye,
When those Tyrolian mountains round us lay.
Companion of that journey and of life,
If I forgot to make it then my prayer
I make it now, that many such a shrine,
Not far withdrawn, yet separate from the strife,
The turmoil of the world, the haste, the care,
Upon life's longer journey may be thine.

SONNET.

IN A PASS OF BAVARIA BETWEEN THE WALCHEN AND THE WALDENSEE.

'His voice was as the sound of many waters.'

A SOUND of many waters !—now I know
To what was likened the large utterance sent
By Him who 'mid the golden lampads went :
Innumerable streams, above, below,
Some seen, some heard alone, with headlong flow
Come rushing ; some with smooth and sheer descent,
Some dashed to foam and whiteness, but all blent
Into one mighty music. As I go,
The tumult of a boundless gladness fills
My bosom, and my spirit leaps and sings :
Sounds and sights are there of the ancient hills,
The eagle's cry, the mountain when it flings
Mists from its brow ; but none of all these things
Like the one voice of multitudinous rills.

TO A LADY SINGING.

I.

HOW like a swan, cleaving the azure sky,
The voice upsoars of thy triumphant song,
That whirled awhile resistlessly along
By the great sweep of threatening harmony,
Seemed, overmatched, to struggle helplessly
With that impetuous music ; yet ere long
Escaping from the current fierce and strong,
Pierces the clear crystalline vault on high.
And I too am upborne with thee together
In circles ever narrowing, round and round,
Over the clouds and sunshine—who erewhile,
Like a blest bird of charmëd summer weather
In the blue shadow of some foamless isle,
Was floating on the billows of sweet sound.

II.

When the mute voice returns from whence it came,
The silence of a momentary awe,
A brief submission to the eternal law
Of beauty doth to every heart proclaim
A Spirit has been summoned ; yea, the same
Whose dwelling is the inmost human heart,
Which will not from that home and haunt depart
Which nothing can quite vanquish or make tame.
It is the noblest gift beneath the moon,
The power this awful presence to compel
Out of the lurking places where it lies
Deep hidden and removed from mortal eyes :
Oh reverence thou in fear and cherish well
This privilege of few this rarest boon.

III.

Look ! for a season (ah, too brief a space),
While yet the spell is strong upon the rout,
With something of still fear all move about,
As though a breath or motion might displace
The Spirit which had come of heavenly grace
Among them, for a moment to redeem
Their thoughts and passions from the selfish dream
Of earthly life, and its inglorious race.
If we might keep this awe upon us still,
If we might walk for ever in the power
And in the shadow of the mystery,
Which has been spread around us at this hour,
This might suffice to guard us from much ill,
This might go far to keep us pure and free.

IV.

But the spell fails, and of the many here,
Who have been won to brief forgetfulness
Of all that would degrade them and oppress,
Who have been carried out of their dim sphere
Of being to realms brighter and more clear,
How few to-morrow will retain a trace,
Which the world's business shall not soon efface,
Of this high mood, this time of reverent fear.
In these high raptures there is nothing sure,
Nothing which we can rest on, to sustain
The spirit long, or arm it to endure
Against temptation, weariness, or pain ;
And if they promise to preserve it pure
From earthly taint, the promise is in vain.

v.

Yet proof is here of men's unquenched desire
That the procession of their lives might be
More equable, majestic, pure and free ;
That there are times when all would fain aspire,
And gladly use the helps, to lift them higher,
Which music, poesy, or nature brings,
And think to mount upon these waxen wings,
Not deeming that their strength shall ever tire.
But who indeed shall his high flights sustain,
Who soar aloft and sink not ? He alone
Who has laid hold upon that golden chain
Of love, fast linked to God's eternal throne,—
The golden chain from heaven to earth let down,
That we might rise by it, nor fear to sink again.

NOT Thou from us, O Lord, but we
Withdraw ourselves from Thee.

When we are dark and dead,
And Thou art covered with a cloud,
Hanging before Thee, like a shroud,
So that our prayer can find no way,
Oh ! teach us that we do not say,
'Where is *thy* brightness fled?'

But that we search and try
What in ourselves has wrought this blame
For Thou remainest still the same,
But earth's own vapours earth may fill
With darkness and thick clouds, while still
The sun is in the sky.

SONNET.

A COUNSELLOR well fitted to advise
In daily life, and at whose lips no less
Men may inquire or nations, when distress
Of sudden doubtful danger may arise,
Who, though his head be hidden in the skies,
Plants his firm foot upon our common earth,
Dealing with thoughts which everywhere have birth,—
This is the poet, true of heart and wise :
No dweller in a baseless world of dream,
Which is not earth nor heaven : his words have past
Into man's common thought and week-day phrase ;
This is the poet, and his verse will last.
Such was our Shakespeare once, and such doth seem
One who redeems our later gloomier days.

SONNET.

ME rather may to tears unbidden move
The meanest print that on a cottage wall
Some ancient deed heroic doth recall,
Or loving act of His, whose life was love,
Than that my heart should be too proud to prove
Emotions and sweet sympathies, until
The magic of some mighty master's skill
Calls hues and shapes of wonder from above :
Since if we do no idle homage pay
To what in art most beautiful is found,
We shall have learned to feel in that same hour
With man's most rude and most unskilled essay
To win the beauty that is floating round
Into abiding forms of grace and power.

SONNET,

CONNECTED WITH THE FOREGOING.

YES, and not otherwise, if we in deed
And with pure hearts are seeking what is fair
In Nature, then, believe, we shall not need
Long anxious quests, exploring earth and air,
Ere we shall find wherewith our hearts to feed :
The beauty that is scattered everywhere
Will in our souls such deep contentment breed,
We shall not pine for aught remote or rare.
We shall not ask from some transcendant height
To gaze on such rare scenes as may surpass
Earth's common shows, ere we will own delight.
We shall not need in quest of these to roam,
While sunshine lies upon our English grass,
And dewdrops glitter on green fields at home.

ENGLAND.

PEACE, Freedom, Happiness, have loved to wait
On the fair islands, fenced by circling seas ;
And ever of such favoured spots as these
Have the wise dreamers dreamed, who would create
That perfect model of a happy state,
Which the world never saw. Oceana,
Utopia such, and Plato's isle that lay
Westward of Gades and the Great Sea's gate.
Dreams are they all, which yet have helped to make
That underneath fair polities we dwell,
Though marred in part by envy, faction, hate—
Dreams which are dear, dear England, for thy sake,
Who art indeed that sea-girt citadel,
And nearest image of that perfect state.

THE ISLAND OF MADEIRA.

THOUGH never axe until a later day
Assailed thy forests' huge antiquity,
Yet elder Fame had many tales of thee—
Whether Phœnician shipman, far astray,
Had brought uncertain notices away
Of islands dreaming in the middle sea;
Or that man's heart, which struggles to be free
From the old worn-out world, had never stay,
Till, for a place to rest on, it had found
A region out of ken, that happier isle,
Which the mild ocean-breezes blow around;
Where they who thrice upon this mortal stage
Had kept their hands from wrong, their hearts from guile,
Should come at length, and live a tearless age.

POLAND, 1831.

THE nations may not be trod out, and quite
Obliterated from the world's great page—
The nations that have filled from age to age
Their place in story. They who in despite
Of this, a people's first and holiest right,
In lust of unchecked power, or brutal rage,
Against a people's life such warfare wage,
With man no more, but with the Eternal fight.
They who break down the barriers He hath set,
Break down what would another time defend
And shelter their own selves; they who forget
(For the indulgence of the present will)
The lasting ordinances, in the end
Will rue their work, when ill shall sanction ill.

TO NICHOLAS, EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.

ON HIS REPORTED CONDUCT TOWARDS THE POLES.

WHAT would it help to call thee what thou art?
When all is spoken, thou remainest still
With the same power and the same evil will
To crush a nation's life out, to dispart
All holiest ties, to turn awry and thwart
All courses that kind nature keeps, to spill
The blood of noblest veins, to maim, or kill
With torture of slow pain the aching heart.
When our weak hands hang useless, and we feel
Deeds cannot be, who then would ease his breast
With the impotence of words? But our appeal
Is unto Him who counts a nation's tears,
With whom are the oppressor and opprest,
And vengeance, and the recompensing years.

FRANCE, 1834.

HOW long shall weary nations toil in blood,
How often roll the still returning stone
Up the sharp painful height, ere they will own
That on the base of individual good,
Of virtue, manners, and pure homes endued
With household graces—that on this alone
Shall social freedom stand—where these are gone,
There is a nation doomed to servitude?
O suffering, toiling France, thy toil is vain!
The irreversible decree stands sure,
Where men are selfish, covetous of gain,
Heady and fierce, unholy and impure,
Their toil is lost, and fruitless all their pain;
They cannot build a work which shall endure.

ODE TO SLEEP.

I CANNOT veil mine eyelids from the light ;
I cannot turn away
From this insulting and importunate day,
That momently grows fiercer and more bright,
And wakes the hideous hum of monstrous flies
In my vexed ear, and beats
On the broad panes, and like a furnace heats
The chamber of my rest, and bids me rise.

I cannot follow thy departing track,
Nor tell in what far meadows, gentle Sleep,
Thou art delaying. I would win thee back,
Were mine some drowsy potion, or dull spell,
Or charmëd girdle, mighty to compel
Thy heavy grace ; for I have heard it said,
Thou art no flatterer, that dost only keep
In kingly haunts, leaving unvisited
The poor man's lowlier shed ;
And when the day is joyless, and its task
Unprofitable, I were fain to ask,
Why thou wilt give it such an ample space,
Why thou wilt leave us such a weary scope
For memory, and for that which men call hope.
Nor wind in one embrace
Sad eve and night forlorn
And undelightful morn.

If with the joyous were thine only home,
I would not so far wrong thee, as to ask
This boon, or summon thee from happier task.
But no,—for then thou wouldst too often roam,

And find no rest ; for me, I cannot tell
What tearless lids there are, where thou mightst dwell :
I know not any unenthralled of sorrow,
I know not one, to whom this joyous morrow,
So full of living motion new and bright,
Will be a summons to secure delight.
And thus I shall not wrong thee, though I claim
Awhile thy presence.—O mysterious Sleep,
Some call thee shadow of a mightier Name,
And whisper how that nightly thou dost keep
A roll and count for him.—
Then be thou on my spirit like his presence dim.

Yet if my limbs were heavy with sweet toil,
I had not needed to have wooed thy might,
But till thy timely flight
Had lain securely in thy peaceful coil ;
Or if my heart were lighter, long ago
Had crushed the dewy morn upon the sod,
That darkened where I trod,
As was my pleasure once, but now it is not so.

And therefore am I seeking to entwine
A coronal of poppies for my head,
Or wreathe it with a wreath engarlanded
By Lethe's slumberous waters. Oh ! that mine
Were some dim chamber turning to the north,
With latticed casement bedded deep in leaves,
That opening with sweet murmur might look forth
On quiet fields from broad o'erhanging eaves ;
And ever when the Spring her garland weaves,
Were darkened with encroaching ivy-trail
And jaggëd vine-leaves' shade ;
And all its pavement starred with blossoms pale
Of jasmine, when the wind's least stir was made ;

Where the sunbeam was verdurous-cool, before
It wound into that quiet nook, to paint
With interspace of light and colour faint
That tessellated floor.

How pleasant were it there in dim recess,
In some close-curtained haunt of quietness,
To hear no tones of human pain and care,
Our own or others'; little heeding there,
If morn or noon or night
Pursued their weary flight,
But musing what an easy thing it were
To mix our opiates in a larger cup,
And drink, and not perceive
Sleep deepening lead his truer kinsman up,
Like undistinguished Night, darkening the skirts of Eve.

SONNET.

WHAT is thy worship but a vain pretence,
Spirit of beauty, and a servile trade,
A poor and an unworthy traffic made
With the most sacred gifts of soul and sense;
If they who tend thine altars, gathering thence
No strength, no purity, may still remain
Selfish and dark, and from life's sordid stain
Find in their ministrations no defence?
—Thus many times I ask, when aught of mean
Or sensual has been brought unto mine ear,
Of them whose calling high is to insphere
Eternal beauty in forms of human art—
Vexed that my soul should ever moved have been
By that which had such falsehood at the heart.

ATLANTIS.

I COULD loose my boat
And could bid it float
Where the idlest wind should pilot,
So its glad course lay
From this earth away,
Toward any untrodden islet.

For this earth is old,
And its heart is cold,
And the palsy of age has bound it;
And my spirit frets
For the viewless nets
Which are hourly clinging round it.

And with joyful glee
We have heard of thee,
Thou Isle in mid-ocean sleeping;
And thy records old,
Which the Sage has told
How the Memphian tombs are keeping.

But we know not where,
'Neath the desert air,
To look for the pleasant places
Of the youth of Time,
Whose austerer prime
The haunts of his childhood effaces.

Like the golden flowers
Of the western bowers,
Have waned their immortal shadows ;
And no harp may tell
Where the asphodel
Clad in light those Elysian meadows.

And thou, fairest Isle
In the daylight's smile,
Hast thou sunk in the boiling ocean,
While beyond thy strand
Rose a mightier land
From the wave in alternate motion ?

Are the isles that stud
The Atlantic flood,
But the peaks of thy tallest mountains,
While repose below
The great waters' flow
Thy towns and thy towers and fountains ?

Have the Ocean powers
Made their quiet bowers
In thy fanes and thy dim recesses ?
Or in haunts of thine
Do the sea-maids twine
Coral wreaths for their dewy tresses ?

Or does foot not fall
In deserted hall,
Choked with wrecks that ne'er won their haven,
By the ebb trailed o'er
Thy untrampled floor,
Which their sunken wealth has paven ?

Oh, appear ! appear !
Not as when thy spear
Ruled as far as the broad Egean,
But in Love's own might,
And in Freedom's right,
Till the nations uplift their Pæan ;

Who now watch and weep,
And their vigil keep,
Till they faint for expectation ;
Till their dim eyes shape
Temple, tower, and cape,
From the cloud and the exhalation.

SONNET.

I STOOD beside a pool, from whence ascended,
Mounting the cloudy platforms of the wind,
A stately heron ; its soaring I attended,
Till it grew dim, and I with watching blind—
When lo ! a shaft of arrowy light descended
Upon its darkness and its dim attire ;
It straightway kindled then, and was afire,
And with the unconsuming radiance blended.
And bird, a cloud, flecking the sunny air,
It had its golden dwelling 'mid the lightning
Of those empyreal domes, and it might there
Have dwelt for ever, glorified and bright'ning,
But that its wings were weak—so it became
A dusky speck again, that *was* a wingëd flame.

TO A FRIEND.

THOU that hast travelled far away,
In lands beyond the sea,
Wilt understand me, when I say
What there has come to me.

In chambers dim thou wilt have wrought,
With no one by to cheer,
And trod the downward paths of thought
In solitude and fear;

Nor till the weary day was o'er,
Into the air have fled
From thought, which could delight no more,
From books, whose power was dead;

What time perchance the drooping day
With burning vapours fills
The deep recesses far away
Of all the golden hills:

Or later, when the twilight blends
All hues, or when the moon
Into the ocean depths descends,
A wavering column, down.

Then hast not thou in spirit leapt,
Emerging from thy gloom,
Like one who unawares o'erstept
The barriers of a tomb:

And in thine exultation cried—
Of gladness having fill,
And in it being glorified—
'The world is beauteous still!'

THE CONSTITUTIONAL EXILES OF 1823.

WISE are ye in a wisdom vainly sought
Through all the records of the historic page ;
It is not to be learned by lengthened age,
Scarce by deep musings of unaided thought.
By suffering and endurance ye have bought
A knowledge of the thousand links that bind
The highest with the lowest of our kind,
And how the indissoluble chain is wrought.
Ye fell by your own mercy once :—beware,
When your lots leap again from fortune's urn,
A heavier error—to be pardoned less :
Yours be it to the nations to declare
That years of pain and disappointment turn
Weak hearts to gall, but wise to gentleness.

1829.

TO THE SAME.

LIKE nightly watchers from a palace tower,
In hope and faith and patience strong to wait
The beacons on the heights, which should relate
How some fenced city of deceit and power
Had fallen—ye have stood for many an hour,
Till your first hope's high movements must be dead,
And if with new ye have not cheered and fed
Your bosoms, dim despair may be your dower.
Yet not for all—though yet no fire may crest
The mountains, or light up their beacons sere—
Your eminent commission so far wrong,
Nor so much flatter the oppressors' rest,
As to give o'er your watching, for so long
As ye shall hope, 'tis reason they must fear.

1829.

DESPONDENCY.

IT is a weary hill
Of moving sand that still
Shifts, struggle as we will,
Beneath our tread :
Of those who went before,
And tracked the desert o'er,
The footmarks are no more,
But gone and fled.

We stray to either side,
We wander far and wide,
We fall to sleep and slide
Far down again :
As through the sand we wade,
We do not seek to aid
Our fellows, but upbraid
Each other's pain.

I gaze on that bright band,
Who on the summit stand,
To order and command,
Like stars on high :
Yet with despairing pace
My way I could retrace,
Or on this desert place
Sink down and die.

As we who toil and weep,
And with our weeping steep
The path o'er which we creep,
They had not striven ;

They must have taken flight
To that serenest height,
And won it by the might
Of wings from heaven.

Alack! I have no wing,
My spirit lacks that spring,
And Nature will not bring
Her help to me.
From her I have no aid,
But light-enwoven shade,
And stream and star upbraid
Our misery.

SAIS.[1]

AN awful statue, by a veil half-hid,
At Sais stands. One came, to whom was known
All lore committed to Etruscan stone,
And all strange voices which dull time has chid
To silence now, by antique pyramid,
Skirting the desert, heard; and what the deep
May in its dimly-lighted chambers keep,
Where Genii groan beneath the seal-bound lid.
He dared to raise that yet unlifted veil
With hands not pure, but never might unfold
What there he saw; madness, the shadow, fell
On his few days, ere yet he went to dwell
With night's eternal people, and his tale
Has thus remained, and will remain, untold.

THE SPIRIT OF BEAUTY.

[FROM JUVENILIA.]

SPIRIT of Beauty, that wast sought of old,
And won to incarnations manifold,
By such as knew that, though like life and fair
The forms they wrought, yet wert thou wanting there,
All were but corpses, doomed to fall away
From their first shape to formless swift decay;
Who therefore with strong prayer and earnest spell
Strove to enforce thee in the shrines to dwell
Which they were rearing, and built up before
A heart's high altar, from all fields of lore
Neglected or untrodden thereon heaping
Rich odorous sweets, and patient vigil keeping
With undiminished faith that in the end
A quickening spark would on that heap descend—
'Tis thou that giv'st whatever is its worth,
Thou art the incense that doth sweeten earth,
And thy outpouring, as of chancel wine,
Can make the meanest goblet most divine;
And though from marshy grounds low mists arise,
And we ourselves would sometimes veil our eyes
Against thee, still upon our fear and doubt
And darkness thou persistest to look out,
And smilest on our solitary need,
Till we are reassured, and onward speed.

Yet looking out upon this life of ours,
And all that would lay waste our pleasant bowers,
Times are there when I could stand still in fear,
Mute and almost expecting I should hear
From hill and meadow, spring and waterfall,
Oracular cave and forest, and from all

Of thine wherein we glory and rejoice
And have our life, an universal voice
As of departing Pan ; and thence this earth
Should be as drear as some extinguished hearth,
And we should wonder that the old delight,
The triumph and traditionary might,
Had passed from story and from ancient song,
Which moved no more than some forgotten tongue,
And from the face and from the voice of woman,
And all things which are beautiful and human ;
Not understanding that ourselves had wrought
This desolation, this bereavement brought
On us and ours. But oh ! if this belief
Be but the mournful shaping of our grief,
If in our heart of hearts thou yet dost dwell,
Though in a foe-encompassed citadel,
And from that fortress issuing wilt regain
One day the limits of thine old domain,
Gathering e'en now high hopes, which undefeated
To their last ark of refuge have retreated,
Oh let them bear thy banner, those who feel
That only in thy service lies their weal,
And that to flee thee is despair and woe,
Though 'tis most hard to follow ; and who know
That thee once seen we evermore must seek
With love untiring, or thou else wilt wreak
Worse than Diana's wrath on him who sees
Thy beauty unattired, and after flees ;
Nor wots he can be only at thy side
And in thy recognition glorified.

YOUNG POETS.

[FROM THE SAME.]

I COULD believe that unto such the world
Is like an antique scroll, newly unfurled,
And all o'erwrit with charactery strange,
Whose very letters wax and wane and change ;
And as by painful toil 'tis understood,
Much evil is decyphered, little good,
Strange dooms and destinies ; and for what is told
In symbol mute and hieroglyphic old,
They look abroad, and seek the counterpart,
Vainly in nature, man, and their own heart,
And are as lutes untuned ; yet meanwhile wake,
As might a lute, though string by string should break,
Tones of strange potency o'er all who know
Or understand a shadow of their woe.
But this must end ; and they their resting have
In the secure sleep of the quiet grave,
Or time interprets what was strange before,
And Nature teaches them her holiest lore,
And shows them in their art a golden key
Unto the temple of her mystery ;
Till, like magicians potent to compel
The ministers that hate them to their spell,
They reinvoke and subject to their strain
Even their own past disquietude and pain,
Wresting from these the secret of their power,
Till their own woe and weakness is a dower
Of strength to others, and themselves have made
Even of the loads which on their spirits weighed
And bowed to earth, and would have crushed them there,
Steps to ascend, and a majestic stair,
Leading to platforms of intenser seeing,
More ample prospect, and serener being.

THE HEALING OF THE WATERS.

2 KINGS II. 19—22.

A BITTER barren-making stream
The tears that flowed for sin,
Till the great Prophet came, and cast
Salt from the new cruise in.

Yet staunched he not the waters so—
That they should flow no more:
He healed their springs, then bid them run
As freely as before:

He healed their source, and well has proved
His word not given in vain,
That now they never should bring death
Nor barrenness again.

SONNET.

THE moments which we rescue and redeem
From the bare desert and the waste of years,
To fertilize, it may be with our tears,
Yet so that for time after they shall teem
With better than rank weeds, and wear a gleam
Of visionary light, and on the wind
Shed odours from the fields long left behind,
These and their fruit to us can never seem
Indifferent things; and therefore do I look
Not without gentle sadness upon thee,
And liken thy outgoing, O my book,
To the impatience of a little brook,
Which might with flowers have lingered pleasantly,
Yet toils to perish in the mighty sea.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

I SAY to thee, do thou repeat
To the first man thou mayest meet
In lane, highway, or open street—

That he and we and all men move
Under a canopy of love,
As broad as the blue sky above ;

That doubt and trouble, fear and pain
And anguish, all are shadows vain,
That death itself shall not remain ;

That weary deserts we may tread,
A dreary labyrinth may thread,
Through dark ways underground be led ;

Yet, if we will one Guide obey,
The dreariest path, the darkest way
Shall issue out in heavenly day ;

And we, on divers shores now cast,
Shall meet, our perilous voyage past,
All in our Father's house at last.

And ere thou leave him, say thou this,
Yet one word more—they only miss
The winning of that final bliss,

Who will not count it true, that Love,
Blessing, not cursing, rules above,
And that in it we live and move.

And one thing further make him know,
That to believe these things are so,
This firm faith never to forego,

Despite of all which seems at strife
With blessing, all with curses rife,
That this *is* blessing, this *is* life.

SOME murmur, when their sky is clear
And wholly bright to view,
If one small speck of dark appear
In their great heaven of blue :
And some with thankful love are filled,
If but one streak of light,
One ray of God's good mercy gild
The darkness of their night.

In palaces are hearts that ask,
In discontent and pride,
Why life is such a dreary task,
And all good things denied :
And hearts in poorest huts admire
How Love has in their aid,
Love that not ever seems to tire,
Such rich provision made.

ON AN EARLY DEATH

AH me! of them from whom the good have hope,
Of them whom virtue for her liegemen claims
How many the world tames,
That with its evil they quite cease to cope,
And their first fealty sworn to beauty and truth
Break early; and amid their sinful youth
Make shipwreck of all high and glorious aims.
How few the fierce and fiery trial stand,
To be as weapons tempered and approved
For an Almighty hand;
How few of all the streamlets that were moved,
Do ever unto clearness run again;
And therefore is it marvellous to us,
When of these weapons one is broken thus,
When of these fountains one would seem in vain
Renewed in clearness, and is staunched before
It has had leave to spread fresh streams the desert o'er.

Ah me! that by so frail and slight a thread
Our life is holden—that not life alone,
But all that life has won
May in one hour be gathered to the dead;
The slow additions that build up the mind,
The skill that through temptation we have bought
And suffering, and whatever has been taught
By lengthened years and converse with our kind,
That all may cease together; and the tree
Reared to its height by many a slow degree,
And by the dews, the sunshine, and the showers
Of many springs, an instant may lay low,
With all its living towers,
And all the fruit mature of growth and slow,
Which on the trees of wisdom leisurely must grow.

Alas! it is another thing to wail,
That when the foremost runners sink and fail,
They cannot pass their torch or forward place
To them that are behind them in the race;
But their extinguished torches must be laid
Together with them in the dust of death:
That when the wise and the true-hearted fade,
So little of themselves they can bequeath
To us, who yet are in the race of life,
For travail and for toil, for weariness and strife.

—But from behind the veil,
Where they are entered who have gone before,
A solemn voice arrests my feeble wail—
And has thy life such worthier aims, O man,
That thou shouldst grudge to give its little span
To truth and knowledge, and faith's holy lore,
Because the places for the exercise
Of these may be withdrawn from mortal eyes?
Win truth, win goodness—for which man was made,
And fear not thou of these to be bereft,
Fear not that these shall in the dust be laid,
Or in corruption left,
Or be the grave-worm's food.
Nothing is left or lost, nothing of good
Or lovely; but whatever its first springs
Has drawn from God, returns to Him again;
That only which 'twere misery to retain
Is taken from you, which to keep were loss;
Only the scum, the refuse, and the dross
Are borne away unto the grave of things;
Meanwhile whatever gifts from heaven descend,
Thither again have flowed,
To the receptacle of all things good,
From whom they come, and unto whom they tend,
Who is the First and Last, the Author and the End.

Nor dare to sorrow with increase of grief,
When they who go before
Go furnished; or because their span was brief,
When in the acquist of what is life's true gage,
Truth, knowledge, and that other worthiest lore,
They had fulfilled already a long age.
For doubt not but that in the worlds above
There must be other offices of love,
That other tasks and ministries there are,
Since it is promised that his servants, there
Shall serve Him still. Therefore be strong, be strong,
Ye that remain, nor fruitlessly revolve,
Darkling, the riddles which ye cannot solve,
But do the works that unto you belong;
Believing that for every mystery,
For all the death, the darkness, and the curse
Of this dim universe,
Needs a solution full of love must be:
And that the way whereby ye may attain
Nearest to this, is not through broodings vain,
And half-rebellious, questionings of God,
But by a patient seeking to fulfil
The purpose of his everlasting will,
Treading the path which lowly men have trod;
Since it is ever they who are too proud
For this, that are the foremost and most loud
To judge his hidden judgments, these are still
The most perplexed and lost at his mysterious will.

SABBATION.

A JEWISH LEGEND.

BY the dark mountains guarded well, and on the other side
Of Havila, for gold renowned, a land lies broad and wide.
Four-square it lies—a man at speed might travel every way,
And would not pass from end to end until the ninetieth day.
The mountains with their barriers dark upon three sides enclose
This goodly land, but on the fourth a wondrous river flows;
Between whose banks no water rolls, but rush and roar along
Rocks, stones, and sand, together mixed, with tumult loud and strong;
And higher than the houses' tops huge fragments leap and fly—
But on the holy seventh day it sleepeth quietly.
Sabbation is it therefore named, for on the Sabbath day,
From eve till eve again comes back, that river sleeps alway;
Without a sound or slightest stir that day it doth remain,
But then, the Sabbath done, returns unto its strength again—
So fierce that if in middle stream were set an adamant rock,
It would be shattered presently before the furious shock.
By night a two days' journey off its rushing heard may be,
Like thunder, like a mighty wind, or like the roaring sea.

Behind this river dwell secure the children of the race,
Which had on Israel's mountains once their quiet resting-place;
Till to the Assyrian for their sins delivered for a prey,
Who from their soil uprooted them, and planted far away.

But they, when in that foreign land awhile they had remained,
Said,—'Let us rise and seek some place by idols unprofaned,
Where we, by sore affliction taught, at length may understand,
And keep the law we never kept while in our former land.'*
This counsel taking with themselves, and caring not for foes,
And caring not for length of way, nor danger, they arose;
They rose together, and dryshod the great Euphrates passed,
And ever journeying northward reached this goodly land at last—
A goodly land, with all good things their old land knew, supplied,
And all the plagues that vexed them there, for ever turned aside:
A land of streams that fear no drought, that never fail to flow,
Of wells not fed by scanty rains, but springing from below;
Where never upon sounding wing advance the locust swarm,
To hide the noon-day sun, and bring to every green thing harm;
Where never from the desert blows the scorching fiery wind,
That breathes o'er fields of flowers, and leaves a wilderness behind:
The early and the latter rain their heavens ne'er refuse,
And what the day burns up, the night repairs with copious dews.
With their own hands they till the ground, and have of nothing lack;
The grain upon their furrows cast a hundredfold gives back,

* See the apocryphal 2 Esdras iii. 13, 40—47.

And twice the cattle on their hills yield increase every year,
And trees that in no other land bear fruit, are laden here.
Not readier on Engeddi's steeps the wounded balsam sheds
Its life's blood, and the Indian nard lifts here its spiky heads.
And gardens of delight are theirs ; and what is strange elsewhere
Of costly gum or fragrant spice, is counted common there ;
No snake or scorpion, fox or dog, nor any beast unclean,
Nor aught that can bring harm to man, through all the land is seen.
A little child will feed the flocks in forests far away,
Not fearing man, nor evil beast, nor demon of noon-day.
And theirs the ancient Hebrew tongue, the speech which angels love ;
And their true prayers in that are made, and always heard above—
Heard too in doleful worlds below, where at their hours of prayer
The anguish intermits awhile, the hopeless misery there.
And often when a man goes forth in lonely wilds to pray,
An angel then will meet him there, and—Grace be with thee !—say ;
No child before his parents' eyes is laid on funeral bier,
And none departs that has not reached his happy hundredth year ;
That has not at the least beheld his children's children rise
About his knees, to glad his heart and cheer his failing eyes.
Nor is the life then torn away by rude and painful death,
But Gabriel with a gentle kiss draws out the flitting breath :
And when the soul arrives at last in Paradise, there wait
A crowd of ministering spirits there around its ruby gate ;

They put the sordid grave-clothes off, in raiment pure and white
They clothe him, glistening garments spun from glorious clouds of light;
They set two crowns upon his head, of purest gold is one,
The other diadem is wrought of pearl and precious stone:
And giving myrtle in his hand, they praise him, and they say,
'Go in and eat thy bread henceforth with gladness every day.'

The day before a child is born, the angel, that is given
To be his guide and guard through life, and lead him safe to heaven,
In spirit takes him where the Blest with light divine are fed,
Each sitting on his golden throne, his crown upon his head;
'And these,' he says, 'are they who loved the law of the Most High,
And such by his eternal grace come hither when they die:
Live thou and be an heir at length through mercy of this grace,
Since thou must for thy warning know there is another place.'
The angel carries then that soul at eventide to hell,
Where the ungodly evermore in painful prison dwell.
'These wretched once, as thou wilt soon, the breath of life did draw,
And therefore be thou wise betimes, and keep and love the law.'

And if one see his brother sin, or hear him speaking vain
Or evil words, he leaves him not unchidden to remain,

But in just anger says to him, 'My brother, wilt thou know
That sin upon our fathers brought God's wrath and all their woe?'
And thus doth each one each exhort, in righteousness and fear,
And with true hearts the righteous Lord to honour and revere.

And them, a people honouring Him, He honours in the sight
Of all their foes, exalting them to power and glorious might.
While they fear none, the fear of them on every land is shed,
That none of all the neighbouring folks dare stir them up for dread—
Well pleased if only they by them may unassailed remain,
And princes far and near send gifts for their goodwill to gain;
And five-and-twenty kings to them appointed tribute pay,
And hands of strength upon the necks of all their foes they lay.
And when their Patriarch rideth forth for pleasure or for state,
A hundred thousand men or more on his outgoing wait;
A hundred thousand horsemen, all in glittering steel arrayed,
Whose trappings all are scarlet dyed, whose banners wide displayed.

At break of morning every day, the noblest of the land
In pomp and solemn state ride forth, a high exulting band,
As though to welcome and to greet and lead in triumph home
Some Royal Stranger, looked-for long, who now at length should come.

With some dejection on their brows at evening they return—
'Why comes He not? why tarries He until another morn?'
But soon the shadow from their brows, the gloom has passed away;
And that rejoicing troop goes forth upon the following day—
As high of hope, in all their state, they issue forth again,
Sure that their high-raised hope will not prove evermore in vain;
That He will one day come indeed, and with a mighty hand
Will lead them back to repossess their old, their glorious land.

TO THE EVENING STAR.

SOLE star that glitterest in the crimson west,
'Fair child of beauty, glorious lamp of love,
How cheerfully thou lookest from above,'
With what unblinking eye and jocund crest.
Yet grief from thee has passed into my breast,
For all surpassing glory needs must be
Full unto us of sad perplexity,
Seen from this place of sin and sin's unrest.
Yea, all things which such perfect beauty own
As this of thine is, tempt us unto tears;
For whether thou sole-sittest on thy throne,
Or leadest choral dances of thy peers,
Thou and all nature, saving man alone,
Fulfil with music sweet your Maker's ears.

HONOR NEALE.

A GRIEVOUS wrong it were, and treason done
Unto the common heart of human kind,
By which all live and love, to yield this thought
Place for an instant, that because the griefs
We tell of, are not high and stately woes,
But simple sorrows, pangs of every day,—
Or that because the hearts that owned those griefs
Beat underneath low roofs of cottages,
We therefore shall not win a listening ear;
And in this faith bold am I to relate
The lowly history of a common grief,
A sorrow in which high and low alike
Have equal share, a mother's grief—and this
In words as nearly as may be her own;
For while invention barren proves and old,
Nature is rich and manifold and new.

But this much needful preface to her tale
Let first find place. A little cottage girl
Was Honor Neale; and in the further west
Of Ireland stood her parents' lowly hut:
And there she was a learner for a while,
As God's good hand had ordered, at a school
Where the pure doctrine and the lore of Christ
Were truly taught; and there this little child,
Though slow to learn, yet rendered earnest heed
To all she heard; but after some short time,
Before it could be known if that good seed
Sown in her heart would put forth blade and ear
Her parents, whether of their own accord,

Or urged by some suggestion from without,
Withdrew her, and she laboured in the fields
Beside her father. 'Twas a late wet spring,
And she, of weakly frame, could ill endure
To carry heavy burdens on her back,
As she was tasked to do, till many times
She left her labour, and returning home
Sat down and cried for weariness and pain;
But still her mother, thinking that she made
More of her pains than need was, in the hope
She might be suffered to return to school,
Would sometimes ask her, had she then no mind
To lend her father what small help she could,
On whom the burden of a family
Of many daughters with one only boy
Pressed heavily—and then without a word
She would return unto her work again.
But soon she evidently grew too weak
For toil, and soon too weak to leave the house.
Three years her sickness lasted; in which while,
In a dark corner of the cottage sitting,
Much in her reading she improved herself,
And of her own accord she learnt by heart
Some hymns, with which she solaced lonely hours;
But chiefly was delighted when they came
To visit her, as now they often did,
Who with a lively interest kept in mind
This child, somewhile a pupil in their care.
But if through gracious teaching from on high,
And through that lengthened discipline of pain,
In spirit she grew fitter for her change,
In body she grew weaker day by day;
And by degrees her pains had so increased,
That when the tidings came that she was gone,
What could they do, who knew what she endured,
But render hearty thanks for her release?

Willing to speak some comfort if they might
Unto the sorrowing, willing too to learn
How at the last it fared with this poor child,
The friends of whom I speak, not many days
After the tidings reached them of her death,
Knocked at the cottage door yet once again.
Much was the mother at their entrance moved ;
For all the past, associated with them,
Came to her mind ; but presently she spoke,
And seemed to find much comfort and relief
In talking freely of her child, and all
Her sorrow into sympathizing ears
Outpouring, and abruptly thus began—
'For months before she died she slept with me,'
For I had pains and troubles of my own,
Which would have kept me waking anyhow,
And I was glad the others in the house,
Who had been toiling hard the whole day long,
And could enjoy sound sleep, should have their rest
Unbroken. Often in the dark dark night,
When all the house was quiet, she would say,
If I had risen to move her in the bed
More times than common, or to give her drink,
"Oh, mother, when you used to bid me do
Things which I did not like, how many times
I disobeyed you—I am much afraid
I often vexed and grieved you at the heart."
"No, Honor, you were always a good child,"
I answered, and 'twas nothing more than truth.
Ah, Sir, if she were sitting by my side,
I should not now be praising her this way;
And it is rather I should grieve to think
I did not show more tenderness to her.
For, Honor, had I thought that you and I
Would have to part so soon, I would have been
Much kinder to you. She has lain awake

For hours together, then as if a thought
Suddenly struck her,—"This is not the way
I should be praying. Mother, lift me up,
And set the pillow under my sore knee."
And then she has continued so, until
Her head grew heavy, and she asked again
To be set down. How often in the night,
When all is quiet in the lonesome house,
I now stretch out my hands and feel about,
Betwixt awake and sleeping, round the bed—
For this now comes of course, and when my hands
Find nothing, feeling round in emptiness,
Oh then it is, or when the dreary light
Of morning comes, my grief sits heaviest on me,
As though my loss were but of yesterday,
So that I scarce have strength to lift my hand,
Or go about the needful work o' the house.
But as the day gets forward, what with tasks
That must be done, and neighbours coming in,
And pleasant light of the sun, and cheerful sounds,
My heart grows somewhat lighter, till the weight
Of all comes back at evening again.

The very day before she died, she said,
"Dear mother, would you lift me in your arms,
And carry me this once over the door,
That I might look on the green fields again?"
The day was cold and raw—and I refused,
Till seeing that her mind was set on this,
I wrapped the blanket round her safe and warm;
But when I took her in my arms, it went
Unto my heart—I raised her with such ease!
She had so pined and wasted, that her weight
Was even as nothing; but I bore her out
Into the air, and carried her all round
The clover field, and showed her everything;

And as I brought her back she only said,
Supposing I was wearied with her weight,
"I never shall be asking this again."

And the last day, the morning that she died,
She was as usual reading in the book
Which had been given her when she quitted school:
Ah! Sir, I have forgotten most of what
Was in that book; but when I call to mind
Its beautiful words, it makes me sad to think
That there was no such learning in my time,
For so I might be reading now myself
The very words that I have heard her read,
And maybe might find comfort for my grief;
I know at least that she found comfort there,
'Twas that which made her happy at the last.
For at the first, when first her pains began,
She could not bear to think that she was dying,
And would grow angry if a neighbour spoke
As though her end was near: and the first time
She was persuaded she could not recover,
"Oh mother," she cried out in agony,
"Where am I going? Am I going where
I never can come back to you again,
And shall I not talk to you any more,
And never sit beside you and look up
Into your face, when you are suffering pain,
And ask what ails you?" Then she would at first
Be at some times impatient in her pains,
And then I could do nothing to her mind.
But for the last months of her life she seemed
To count that each thing was too good for her;
And any little service done to her,
And every little present which was brought
By a kind neighbour, was enough to make
The thankful tears to come into her eyes.

In all your life you never could have seen
One young or old so willing to depart,
Nor yet so ready ; 'tis not I alone
Say this, but one who had more right to know.

For 'twas about three weeks before the last,
We saw that there was something on her mind,
And questioning her, she answered that she wished
To see the Priest, and to confess herself
Once more before she died. He came at once,
And was alone with her for near an hour :
And when he just was standing at the door
Ready to mount his horse, I heard him say
Unto some neighbours that were standing by—
" I never saw a happier, holier child
Than that is, ready to depart this world."
But then as he was taking his last leave,
She fixed her eyes upon him with a look
As though she had left something still unsaid.
He asked her,—" Is there anything, dear child,
You have forgotten which you wish to tell ?
You need not fear to speak before them all."
" Well, Sir," she answered, " I was thinking then,
'Tis now about three years ago there lived
A little orphan here, and she and I
Were often sent into the fields together
To tend the cows ; and when 'twas cold and wet
I many times would run into the house,
That I might ask my mother for some food,
Or warm myself awhile, and did not care
To leave her out alone in all the cold :
I hoped I might have seen her before this,
And have her pardon asked before she died,
For that has ever since been on my mind,
And during all my illness troubling me ;
For had she had a mother of her own,

She would have gone to her as stout and bold
As I to mine, and boldly asked of her
All that she wanted." "You are a happy child,
Dying this way, and grieving so your heart
For such a little sin;" and then he said,
The Priest in all our hearing said, "I wish
That I had died when I was of your age,
So not to have more sin on me than yours
To answer for:"—these were his very words.

But I was saying that the day she died
She had been reading for some little time,
And then complained her eyes were growing dim,
And bade me wipe them. I was just then sweeping
The hearth, and had made up our little fire;
But when I heard her speak this way, I knew
What now was coming; but I wiped her eyes
As she desired—I knew it was no use,
And presently she gave me back the book;
"For, mother dear," she said, "I cannot see
To read a single word;" and just as though
She felt she would not want it any more,
Bade me to place it carefully aside,
And putting on the cover, set it by
In the hand-basket. There was no one else
In all the house, excepting she and me—
The others all were gone unto their work.
And now I knew the time was close at hand,
Which had been drawing on for near three years.
And presently I spoke to her again,
And now she made no answer—only stretched
Her hand out to me. I took hold of it,
But in a moment let it go again,
And lighting the twelve tapers held them there—
It was a custom that my mother had,
When one was dying—so I lighted them,

And being lighted, held them all myself,
For there were none beside me in the house.
But when I saw the breath was leaving her,
I dropped them all, and by her side fell down,
But soon recovering picked them up again,
And held them there till they were all burned down,
And as the last of them was going out
She breathed at the same moment her last breath.

And she is gone, Sir,—but what matter now,
What matter? She was but a little child,
Yet Nature cannot choose but sometimes grieve,
And must have way: why had it only been
A stranger's child I had been rearing thus,
And tending for now nearly fourteen years,
My heart would needs be sad to let her go.
But my own child, my darling Honoreen —
Though when I think on all things, I believe
That I am glad He took her to Himself;
It may be I shall follow before long,
For I am a poor weak creature that have seen
Much toil and trouble. Blessed be His Name
That took her first: if I had gone the first,
And left her a poor cripple in the world,
No doubt they would have all been kind to her;
But who is like a mother?—even if they
Had wished it most, they never could have done
What I have done for her; and then at last
She might have wearied all their patience out.
Then blessings be upon His holy Name,
Who called her out of this poor sinful world,
And took her to Himself.
They buried her
Down in the valley in the old churchyard,
Beside the ruined church. I wished to go
And see her laid within her little grave;

'Twould have been better for me, I believe,
If they had suffered me to go with them ;
But they were all against it, and that time
They might have had their way in anything.
But when I saw the little funeral
Wind down the field, I turned and shut the door,
And sitting on a stool I hid my face ;
I know not what it was came over me,
But I grew giddy, and fell down, and struck
My head against the corner of a chair,
And there has been a noise there ever since.

And now I thank you. Many a journey long
You took through wet and cold to see my child,
And she found much of comfort in your words ;
And at the last I think was better pleased
To go than stay. Then why should I so grieve ?
And why should I not rather feel and say,
'Twas the best nursing that I ever did,
To nurse her and to bring her up for Him,
Who called her to the knowledge of Himself,
Then took her out of this poor sinful world ?'

A CENTURY OF COUPLETS.

TO halls of heavenly truth admission wouldst thou win,
Oft Knowledge stands without, while Love may enter in.

Who praises God the most, what says he more than he
Who silent is ? yet who would therefore silent be ?

Thy treasures lodged so low, earth's damps will soon consume :
While time is, lift them up into a higher room.

Lovingly to each other sun and moon give place,
Else were the mighty heaven for them too narrow space.

Lodged in a ruinous hut, thou loathest to depart :
Were thine a prouder house, 'twould prove a bitterer smart.

Only the waters which in perfect stillness lie,
Give back an undistorted image of the sky.

Despise not little sins ; for mountain-high may stand
The pilëd heap made up of smallest grains of sand.

Despise not little sins ; the gallant ship may sink,
Though only drop by drop the watery tide it drink.

Thy soul is that fair bride which hell and heaven woo,
And one perforce must win, to make or to undo.

Merely thyself, O man, thou canst not long abide,
But presently for less or greater must decide.

God many a spiritual house has reared, but never one
Where lowliness was not laid first, the corner stone.

Owe no man aught save love ; but that esteem a debt,
Which thou must ever pay, well pleased to owe it yet.

Rear highly as thou wilt thy branches in the air,
But that thy roots descend as deep in earth have care.

Sin, not till it is left, will duly sinful seem ;
A man must waken first, ere he can tell his dream.

Glad news were it to hear that thou shouldst never die ?
Glad news that pain and sin should last eternally!

When thou art fain to trace a map of thine own heart,
As undiscovered land set down the largest part.

Wouldst thou do harm, and still unharmed thyself abide?
None struck another yet, except through his own side.

God's dealings still are love; his chastenings are alone
Love now compelled to take an altered sterner tone.

From our ill-ordered hearts we oft are fain to roam,
As men go forth who find unquietness at home.

Oh misery! that man will not man's words receive,
Nor, that the serpent stings, till stung himself, believe.

Why furnish with such care thy lodging of a night,
And leave thy lasting home in such a naked plight?

Loved wilt thou be? then love by thee must first be given;
No purchase-money else avails beneath the heaven.

When thou hast thanked thy God for every blessing sent,
What time will then remain for plaint or discontent?

Envy detects the spots in the clear orb of light,
And Love the little stars in the gloomiest saddest night.

Thou canst not choose but serve; man's lot is servitude;
But this of choice thou hast, a bad lord or a good.

As from mine own sin more and farther I depart,
Ah me! my brother's sin will grow a bitterer smart.

One foe we have, who, cherished, rages with worse ire,
Whom to give place to is like oil upon the fire.

Before the eyes of men let duly shine thy light,
But ever let thy life's best part be out of sight.

My proud foe at my hands to take no boon will choose—
—Thy prayers are that one gift which he cannot refuse.

Plead guilty at *man's* bar, and go to judgment straight ;
At God's no other way remains to shun that fate.

As fish with poisoned baits, so pleasures soon are caught ;
'Tis pity both should prove, so taken, good for nought.

We children are from earth weaned hardly, so Heaven strews
Some wormwood on earth's breasts, as tenderest mothers use.

Wouldst thou go forth to bless, be sure of thine own ground ;
Fix well thy centre first, then draw thy circles round.

Sin may be clasped so close we cannot see her face,
Nor seen nor loathed until held from us a small space.

Win lowliness of heart, and having won beware,
And that thou grow not proud of lowliness have care.

Man is a star of heaven cast down upon the earth,
A prince in beggar's weeds, half conscious of his birth.

The sun is in the heavens, on earth the sunshine bright,
And we may close our eyes, but not put out the light.

Who plays a part, from shame shall not keep always clear ;
Hard it is to *be* good, but harder to *appear*.

Their windows and their doors some close, and murmuring say,
The light of heaven ne'er found into my house a way.

How fearful is his case whom now God does not chide,
When sinning worst; to whom even chastening is denied!

When man against the powers above him dared rebel,
His subjects learned from him the rebel's art as well.

God often would enrich, but finds not where to place
His treasure, nor in hand nor heart a vacant space.

The man is happy, Lord, who love like this doth owe,
Loves Thee, his friend in Thee, and for thy sake his foe.

If thou wouldst know sin's strength, thy lusts how hard to tame,
Against them take up arms, and earnest war proclaim.

A dreamer do not wake, if, when his dream is fled,
Thou canst not give him aught of better in its stead.

The oyster sickens while the pearl doth substance win:
Thank God for pains that prove a noble growth within.

Some are resigned to go: might we such grace attain,
That we should need our resignation to remain.

God's loudest threatenings speak of love and tenderest care,
For who, that meant his blow to light, would cry, Beware?

What is our work when God a blessing would impart?
To bring the empty vessel of a needy heart.

Can ever the true prayer of faith unheard remain?
Must not what came from God to Him return again?

Oh leave to God at sight of sin *incensed* to be;
If thou art *grieved*, O man, that is enough for thee.

Till life is coming back, our death we do not feel ;
Light must be entering in, our darkness to reveal.

Use thou, but love not things, given only with intent
To be alleviations of thy banishment.

To lay thy soul's worst sins before thy Lord endure :
Who will not show his hurts, can he expect a cure?

Ill fares the child of heaven, who will not entertain
On earth the stranger's grief, the exile's sense of pain.

Mark how there still has run, enwoven from above,
Through thy life's darkest woof the golden thread of love.

Sin, like a serpent, where her head an entrance finds,
Easily her whole length of body after winds.

What is thy fear, O soul? the fear of that dark place,
Or fear to lose the light of thy Creator's face?

Call not this goodly world a place of harsh restraint :
Such prison-house it were not, but for thy complaint.

Captain and King thou art, and canst command and
fight ;
Yet summon first the Chancellor, and learn the right.

The jailer of himself, he keeps the keys of hell
In his own hands, who yet must there for ever dwell.

Acknowledge present good, or thou wilt need to learn,
And by its loss, thy good, thy mercies to discern.

Some say man has no hurts ; some seek them to reveal
And to exasperate more ; and some to hide and heal.

Ashes and dust thou art—confess it so to be,
And from that moment forth it is not true for thee.

Whence is it if the Lord, the mighty God, is high,
That, lifting up myself, I find Him not more nigh?

Truth, knowledge, wisdom, love, oh lay up these in store,
True wealth which we may share, and yet ourselves have more.

Things earthly we must know ere love them: 'tis alone
Things heavenly that must be first loved and after known.

To see the face of God, this makes the joy of heaven;
The purer then the eye, the more joy will be given.

Who claims thy praise, because the visions of his youth
He now has learned to mock, deserves thy saddest ruth.

The sinews of Love's arm use makes more firm and strong,
Which, being left unused, will fade and fail ere long.

When God afflicts thee, think He hews a rugged stone,
Which must be shaped, or else aside as useless thrown.

'Tis ill with man when this is all he cares to know
Of his own self, to wit, his vileness and his woe.

With patience to endure our griefs we learn not soon,
But how much later still to take them as a boon?

I heard a man proclaim, all men were wholly base:
One such at once I knew there stood before my face.

God loves to work in wax, not marble; let Him find,
When He would mould thine heart, material to his mind.

The same rains rain from heaven on all the forest-trees.
Yet those bring forth sweet fruits, and poisonous berries these.

A thousand blessings, Lord, to us Thou dost impart:
We ask one blessing more, O Lord—a thankful heart.

Wouldst thou abolish quite strongholds of self and sin?
Fear can but make the breach for Love to enter in.

To cure thee of thy pride, that deepest-seated ill,
God humbled his own self—wilt thou thy pride keep still?

God humble and man proud! do angels, when they range
This earth, see any sight at once so sad and strange?

Each dark unloving thought that mirror helps to stain,
Which should God's image true give back to thee again.

What thing thou lovest most, thou mak'st its nature thine,
Earthly, if that be earth—if that be God, divine.

Who showed me that my wound was deadly, made me note,
And at the self-same time, the healing antidote.

Earth waits for sunshine, dew, and rain from heaven above;
So man should wait from God for pity, grace, and love.

Evil, like a rolling stone upon a mountain top,
A child may first impel, a giant cannot stop.

He knew who healed our wounds, we quickly should be fain
Our old hurts to forget—so let the scars remain.

All noblest things are still the commonest; every place
Has water, light, and air, and God's abounding grace.

He is not wholly lost, retaining love for aught ;
Large fire from smallest spark has many times been brought.

God asks not *what*, but *whence*, thy work is : from the fruit
He turns his eye away, to prove the inmost root.

Oh work thy works in God ; He can rejoice in nought
Save only in Himself, and what Himself has wrought.

When will the din of earth grate harshly on our ears ?
When we have once heard plain the music of the spheres.

All nature has a voice, and this the sunflower's word,
I look unto the light ; look thou unto the Lord.

The magnet cries, We both must to our pole incline,
Restless, till that be found, and God, O man, is thine.

Why win we not at once what we in prayer require ?
That we may learn great things as greatly to desire.

To schools of wisdom men with such small profit go,
Because they can but learn what they already know.

One furnace many times will good and evil hold ;
Yet what consumes the dross will only cleanse the gold.

God, being great, great gifts most willingly imparts,
But we continue poor, that have such narrow hearts.

The tasks, the joys of earth, the same in heaven will be ;
Only the little brook has widened to a sea.

Who hunt this world's delight, too late their hunting rue,
When it a lion proves, the hunter to pursue.

Oh wherefore in such haste in men's sight to appear ?
The cedar yields no fruit until its fiftieth year.

SONNET.

ALL beautiful things bring sadness, nor alone
Sweet music, as our wisest Poet spake,*
Because in us keen longings they awake
After the good for which we pine and groan,
From which exiled we make continual moan,
Till once again we may our spirits slake
At those clear streams, which man did first forsake,
When he would dig for fountains of his own.
All beauty makes us sad, yet not in vain,—
For who would be ungracious to refuse,
Or not to use, this sadness without pain,
Whether it flows upon us from the hues
Of sunset, from the time of stars and dews,
From the clear sky, or waters pure of stain?

* 'I am never merry when I hear sweet music.'
SHAKESPEARE.

A BALLAD.

FROM THE SPANISH.

WHO ever such adventure yet,
Or a like delight has known,
To that which Count Arnaldo met
On the morning of St. John?

The knight was riding by the sea,
With his falcon in his hand,
And saw a pinnace fast and free,
That was making to the land.

And he that by the rudder stood
As he went was singing still,
'My galley, O my galley good,
Heaven protect thee from all ill;

'From all the dangers and the woe
That on ocean's waters wait,
Almeria's reefs and shallows low,
And Gibraltar's stormy strait ;

'From Venice and its shallow way,
From the shoals of Flanders' coast,
And from the gulf of broad Biscay,
Where the dangers are the most.'

Then Count Arnaldo spoke aloud,
You might hear his accents well—
'Those words, thou mariner, I would
Unto me that thou wouldst tell.'

To him that mariner replied
In a courteous tone, but free—
'I never sing that song,' he cried,
'Save to one who sails with me.'

XERXES AT THE HELLESPONT.

'CALM is now that stormy water ; it has learned to fear my wrath :
Lashed and fettered now it yields me for my hosts an easy path :'
Seven long days did Persia's monarch on the Hellespontine shore,
Throned in state, behold his armies without pause defiling o'er ;
Only on the eighth the rearward to the further side were past ;
Then one haughty glance of triumph far as eye could reach he cast :

Far as eye could reach he saw them, multitudes equipped
for war,
Medians with their bows and quivers, linkëd armour and
tiar :
From beneath the suns of Afric, from the snowy hills of
Thrace,
And from India's utmost borders, nations gathered in one
place :
At a single mortal's bidding all this pomp of war un-
furled,
All in league against the freedom and the one hope of the
world.

'What though once some petty trophies from my captains
thou hast won,
Think not, Greece, to see another such a day as Mara-
thon :
Wilt thou dare await the conflict, or in battle hope to stand,
When the Lord of sixty nations takes himself his cause
in hand ?
Lo ! they come, and mighty rivers, which they drink of
once, are dried,
And the wealthiest cities beggared, that for them one meal
provide.
Powers of number by their numbers numberless are over-
borne,
So I measure men by measure, as a husbandman his
corn.
Mine are all—this sceptre sways them ; mine is all in
every part :'
And he named himself most happy, and he blessed himself
in heart—
Blessed himself, but on that blessing tears abundant
followed straight,
For that moment thoughts came o'er him of man's painful
brief estate :

Ere a hundred years were finished, where would all those
myriads be?
Hellespont would still be rolling his blue waters to the sea;
But of all those countless numbers not one living would
be found,
A dead host with their dead monarch, silent in the silent
ground.

CHARLES V. BEFORE THE CONVENT OF YUSTE, 1556.

FROM THE GERMAN OF COUNT PLATEN.

'TIS night, and storms continually roar,
Ye monks of Spain, unbar for me the door.

Here in unbroken quiet let me fare,
Save when the loud bell startles me to prayer.

Make ready for me what your house has meet,
A friar's habit and a winding-sheet.

A little cell unto my use assign:
More than the half of all this world was mine.

The head that stoops unto the scissors now,
Under the weight of many crowns did bow.

The shoulders on which now the cowl is flung,
On them the ermine of the Cæsars hung.

I living now as dead myself behold,
And fall in ruins like this kingdom old.

ON A YEW-TREE.

IN HOUND CHURCHYARD, HANTS.

POLLED from this ancient yew-tree may have been
The branch, with which some English archer sped
His arrow, when the bravest stooped their head,
The boldest chivalry of France were seen
A moment's while beneath that tempest keen
To bow their mailëd fronts at Azincour.
Such age is thine, who yet dost still endure,
Unto thy topmost branches fresh and green.

I said—it was a moment in my thought—
In thy continuance thou must see in scorn
Man's feeble generations, that are born
And die, and then unto thy feet are brought.
But no—for they who are of Nature taught,
And Nature's self, are evermore too wise
For barren scorn—her truer sympathies
Grieve with us o'er the ruin death has wrought.

Thou too, thy many hundred summers past,
Thy many hundred winters that have seen
Thee in thy dark robe of unfailing green,
Once and for all must lay it off at last:
While that which at thy feet was sown, and cast
To darkness and dishonour, that weak thing
Shall live again, and in continual spring
Hold ever its immortal beauty fast.

TO A ROBIN REDBREAST,

SINGING IN WINTER.

OH light of heart and wing,
Light-hearted and light-wingëd, that dost cheer
With song of sprightliest note the waning year,
Thou canst so blithely sing,
That we must only chide our own dull heart,
If in thy music we can bear no part.

Thy haunts are winter-bare,
The leaves in which thou didst so lately keep
Are being trodden to a miry heap;
But thou art void of care,
And singest not the less, or rather thou
Hast kept thy best and boldest notes till now.

Thou art so bold to sing
Thy sweetest music in the saddest hour,
Because thy trust is in the love and power,
Which can bring back the spring,
Which can array the naked groves again,
And paint with seasonable flowers the plain.

But we are merely sad,
Whenas for us this earthly life has shed
The leaves that once arrayed it; and instead
Of rich boughs, foliage-clad,
A few bare sticks and twigs stand nakedly,
Fronting against the cold and angry sky.

Yet would we only see
That hope and joy, the growth of lower earth,
Fall from us, that another truer birth
Of the same things may be ;
That the new buds are travelling up behind,
Though hid as yet beneath the naked rind,

We should not then resign
All gladness, when spring promises depart,
But 'mid our wintriest bareness should find heart
To join our songs with thine,
Strong to fulfil, in spirit and in voice,
That hardest of all precepts—to rejoice.

RETRIBUTION.

OH righteous doom, that they who make
Pleasure their only end,
Ordering the whole life for its sake,
Miss that whereto they tend.

While they who bid stern duty lead,
Content to follow, they,
Of duty only taking heed,
Find pleasure by the way.

EVENING HYMN.

TO the sound of evening bells
All that lives to rest repairs,
Birds unto their leafy dells,
Beasts unto their forest lairs.

All things wear a home-bound look,
From the weary hind that plods
Through the corn-fields, to the rook
Sailing tow'rd the glimmering woods.

'Tis the time with power to bring
Tearful memories of home
To the sailor wandering
On the far-off barren foam.

What a still and holy time!
Yonder glowing sunset seems
Like the pathway to a clime
Only seen till now in dreams.

Pilgrim, here compelled to roam,
Nor allowed that path to tread;
Now when sweetest sense of home
On all living hearts is shed,

Doth not yearning sad, sublime,
At this season stir thy breast,
That thou canst not at this time
Seek thy home and happy rest?

TO ——.

LOOK what a glory from the setting sun
Has fringed that cloud with silver edges bright,
And how it seems to drink the golden light
Of evening: you would think that it had won
A splendour of its own: but lo! anon
You shall behold a dark mass float away.
Emptied of light and radiance, from the day,
Its glory faded utterly and gone.
And doubt not we should suffer the same loss
As this weak vapour, which awhile did seem
Transfigured and made pure of all its dross,
If, having shared the light, we should misdeem
That light our own, or count we hold in fee
That which we must receive continually.

TO THE SAME.

WE live not in our moments or our years:
The present we fling from us like the rind
Of some sweet Future, which we after find
Bitter to taste, or bind *that* in with fears,
And water it beforehand with our tears—
Vain tears for that which never may arrive:
Meanwhile the joy whereby we ought to live,
Neglected or unheeded, disappears.
Wiser it were to welcome and make ours
Whate'er of good, though small, the present brings—
Kind greetings, sunshine, song of birds, and flowers,
With a child's pure delight in little things;
And of the griefs unborn to rest secure,
Knowing that mercy ever will endure.

TO THE SAME.

IF sorrow came not near us, and the lore
Which wisdom-working sorrow best imparts,
Found never time of entrance to our hearts,
If we had won already a safe shore,
Or if our changes were already o'er,
Our pilgrim being we might quite forget,
Our hearts but faintly on those mansions set,
Where there shall be no sorrow any more.
Therefore we will not be unwise to ask
This, nor secure exemption from our share
Of mortal suffering, and life's drearier task—
Not this, but grace our portion so to bear,
That we may rest, when grief and pain are over,
With the meek Son of our Almighty Lover.

TO THE SAME.

O DOWERED with a searching glance to see
Quite through the hollow masks, wherewith the bare
And worthless shows of greatness vizored are,
This lore thou hast, because all things to thee
Are proven by the absolute decree
Of duty, and whatever will not square
With that prime wisdom, though of seeming fair
Or stately, thou rejectest faithfully:
Till chidden in thy strength, each random aim
Of good, whose aspect heavenward does not turn,
Shrinks self-rebuked—thou looking kindliest blame
From the calm region of thine eyes that burn
With tempered but continuous flashes bright,
Like the mild lightnings of a tropic night.

TO THE SAME.

HOW thick the wild-flowers blow about our feet,
Thick-strewn and unregarded, which, if rare,
We should take note how beautiful they were,
How delicately wrought, of scent how sweet.
And mercies which on every path we meet,
Whose very commonness should win more praise,
Do for that very cause less wonder raise,
And these with slighter thankfulness we greet.
Yet pause *thou* often on life's onward way,
Pause time enough to stoop and gather one
Of these sweet wild-flowers—time enough to tell
Its beauty over; this when thou hast done,
And marked it duly, then if thou canst lay
It wet with thankful tears into thy bosom, well!

TO MY CHILD.

THY gladness makes me thankful every way,
To look upon thy gladness makes me glad;
While yet in part it well might render sad
Us thinking that we too might sport and play,
And keep like thee continual holiday,
If we retained the things which once we had,
If we like happy neophytes were clad
Still in baptismal stoles of white array.
And yet the gladness of the innocent child
Has not more matter for our thankful glee
Than the dim sorrows of the man defiled;
Since both in sealing one blest truth agree—
Joy is of God, but heaviness and care
Of our own hearts and what has harboured there.

AN open wound which has been healed anew;
A stream dried up, that once again is fed
With waters making green its grassy bed;
A tree that withered was, but to the dew
Puts forth young leaves and blossoms fresh of hue
Even from the branches which had seemed most dead;
A sea which having been disquieted,
Now stretches like a mirror calm and blue,—
Our hearts to each of these were likened well.
But Thou wert the physician and the balm;
Thou, Lord, the fountain, whence anew was filled
Their parchëd channel; Thou the dew that fell
On their dead branches; 'twas thy voice that stilled
The storm within; Thou didst command the calm.

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

THE strong in spiritual action need not look
Upon the new-found year as on a scroll,
The which their hands lack cunning to unroll,
But in it read, as in an open book,
All they are seeking—high resolve unshook
By circumstance's unforeseen control,
Successful striving, and whate'er the soul
Has recognized for duty, not forsook.
But they whom many failures have made tame,
Question the future with that reverent fear,
Which best their need of heavenly aid may show,
Will it have purer thought, and loftier aim
Pursued more loftily? That a man might know
What thou wilt bring him, thou advancing year!

ON THE CONSECRATION OF A NEW CHURCHYARD.

THAT we may here securely lay our dead,
In peace to rest till that great trumpet call,
This spot henceforth we hedge around from all
Offence of careless or injurious tread;
And from henceforth this mould is hallowëd,
That so not merely by an outward law,
But through a secret and invisible awe
They may be guarded in their narrow bed.
Ye reverential fears lest aught offend
The unfeeling trunk, or outrage the dry dust,
Fears by this work attested, hail! all hail!
Sure pledge and proof that this is not the end;
Till faith, and piety, and Christian trust
Fail from among us, ye shall never fail.

LORD, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in thy presence will prevail to make,
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parchëd grounds refresh, as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear;
We kneel how weak, we rise how full of power.
Why therefore should we do ourselves this wrong
Or others—that we are not always strong,
That we are ever overborne with care,
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?

A GARDEN so well watered before morn
Is hotly up, that not the swart sun's blaze,
Down beating with unmitigated rays,
Nor scorching winds from fiery deserts borne,
Shall quite prevail to leave it bare and shorn
Of its green beauty, shall not quite prevail
That all its morning freshness shall exhale,
Till evening and the evening dews return—
A blessing such as this our hearts might reap,
The freshness of the garden they might share,
Through the long day a heavenly freshness keep,
If knowing how the day and the day's glare
Must beat upon them, we would largely steep
And water them betimes with dews of prayer.

WHEN hearts are full of yearning tenderness
For the loved absent, whom we cannot reach,
By deed or token, gesture or kind speech,
The spirit's true affection to express ;
When hearts are full of innermost distress,
And we are doomed to stand inactive by,
Watching the soul's or body's agony,
Which human effort helps not to make less—
Then like a cup capacious to contain
The overflowings of the heart, is prayer ;
The longing of the soul is satisfied,
The keenest darts of anguish blunted are ;
And though we cannot cease to yearn or grieve,
We yet have learned in patience to abide.

IF we with earnest effort could succeed
To make our life one long connected prayer,
As lives of some perhaps have been and are,
If never leaving Thee, we had no need
Our wandering spirits back again to lead
Into thy presence, but continued there,
Like angels standing on the highest stair
Of the sapphire throne, this were to pray indeed.
But if distractions manifold prevail,
And if in this we must confess we fail,
Grant us to keep at least a prompt desire,
Continual readiness for prayer and praise,
An altar heaped and waiting to take fire
With the least spark, and leap into a blaze.

THE TEMPTATION.

WHEN man was foiled in Paradise, he fell
From that fair spot, thenceforward to confess
The barren and the thorny wilderness
Was the one place where he had right to dwell:
And therefore in the wilderness as well
Our second Head did that dread strife decide,
And those closed gates again set open wide,
Victorious o'er the frauds and strength of hell.
Thou wentest to the proof, O fearless Lord,
Even to the desert, as thy battle field,
A champion going of his free accord;
We had no fears, for unlike him of old
Who lost that battle for us, Thou didst wield
Arms of unearthly temper, heavenly mould.

WHEN we have failed to chasten and restrain
Our wandering thoughts, and in return they cheat
And mock us with some poor yet proud conceit,
And fondest fancies in procession vain
(Ourselves their centre), flock through heart and brain,
Each tendering amplest homage at our feet,
Till loathing of each humbler task we meet
Has grown upon us, scorn and sick disdain—
What then will make our guilty pride to sink,
Or what the spirit's temper will restore,—
Where in the world of healing is there spell
So mighty, as at times like these to think
Of Jesus sitting by Samarian well,
Or teaching some poor fishers on the shore?

HE might have reared a palace at a word,
Who sometimes had not where to lay his head :
Time was, and He who nourished crowds with bread
Would not one meal unto Himself afford :
Twelve legions girded with angelic sword
Were at his beck, the scorned and buffeted :
He healed another's scratch, his own side bled,
Side, feet, and hands, with cruel piercings gored.
Oh wonderful the wonders left undone !
And scarce less wonderful than those He wrought ;
Oh self-restraint, passing all human thought,
To have all power, and be as having none ;
Oh self-denying Love, which felt alone
For needs of others, never for its own !

ULYSSES, sailing by the Sirens' isle,
Sealed first his comrades' ears, then bade them fast
Bind him with many a fetter to the mast,
Lest those sweet voices should their souls beguile,
And to their ruin flatter them, the while
Their homeward bark was sailing swiftly past;
And thus the peril they behind them cast,
Though chased by those weird voices many a mile.
But yet a nobler cunning Orpheus used:
No fetter he put on, nor stopped his ear,
But ever, as he passed, sang high and clear
The blisses of the Gods, their holy joys,
And with diviner melody confused
And marred earth's sweetest music to a noise.

WERE the sad tablets of our hearts alone
A dreary blank, for Thee the task were slight,
To draw fair letters there and lines of light:
But while far other spectacle is shown
By them, with dismal traceries overdrawn,
Oh! task it seems, transcending highest might,
Ever again to make them clean and white,
Effacing the sad secrets they have known.
And then what heaven were better than a name,
If there must haunt and cling unto us there
Abiding memories of sin and shame?
Dread doubt! which finds no answer anywhere
Except in Him, who with Him power did bring
To make us feel our sin an alien thing.

IN the mid garden doth a fountain stand ;
From font to font its waters fall alway,
Freshening the leaves by their continual play :—
Such often have I seen in southern land,
While every leaf, as though by light winds fanned,
Has quivered underneath the dazzling spray,
Keeping its greenness all the sultry day,
While others pine aloof, a parchëd band.
And in the mystic garden of the soul
A fountain, nourished from the upper springs,
Sends ever its clear waters up on high,
Which while a dewy freshness round it flings,
All plants which there acknowledge its control
Show fair and green, else drooping, pale, and dry.

ST. CHRYSOSTOM.

'TIS not by action only, not by deed,
Though that be just and holy, pure and wise,
That man may to his last perfection rise ;
Of suffering as of doing he has need :
Thus prospers with due change the heavenly seed,
While stormy night succeeds to sunny day :
Thus the good metal, proven every way,
From the last dross that clung to it is freed.
And thus for thee, O glorious man, on whom
Love well-deserved, and honour waited long,
In thy last years, in place of timely ease,
There did remain another loftier doom,
Pain, travail, exile, peril, scorn and wrong—
Glorious before, but glorified by these.

'Into whatever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.'—MATT. x. 11.

LORD, weary of a painful way,
All night our heads we would not lay
Under the naked sky;
But ask who worthiest? who will best
Entreat a tired and lowly guest
With promptest courtesy?

And Thou art worthiest; there will not
One loving usage be forgot
By Thee; thy kiss will greet
Us entering; Thou wilt not disdain
To wash away each guilty stain
From off our soilëd feet.

We enter, from this time to prove
Thy hospitality and love
Shown tow'rd thy meanest guest:
From house to house we would not stray,
For whither should we go away?
With Thee is perfect rest.

WEEP not for broad lands lost;
Weep not for fair hopes crost;
Weep not when limbs wax old;
Weep not when friends grow cold;
Weep not that Death must part
Thine and the best-loved heart;
Yet weep, weep all thou can—
Weep, weep, because thou art
A sin-defilëd man.

THIS did not once so trouble me,
That better I could not love Thee ;
But now I feel and know
That only when we love, we find
How far our hearts remain behind
The love they should bestow.

While we had little care to call
On Thee, and scarcely prayed at all,
We seemed enough to pray :
But now we only think with shame,
How seldom to thy glorious Name
Our lips their offerings pay.

And when we gave yet slighter heed
Unto our brother's suffering need,
Our hearts reproached us then
Not half so much as now, that we
With such a careless eye can see
The woes and wants of men.

In doing is this knowledge won,
To see what yet remains undone ;
With this our pride repress,
And give us grace, a growing store,
That day by day we may do more,
And may esteem it less.

COMPENSATION.

WOULDST thou from each man's coronal select
The choicest leaf wherewith his brows are deckt;

That all into one chaplet for thy head
Entwined, thou might'st be proudly garlanded?

Look round thee—is not each thing else content,
Having a share, not all the ornament?

The sweet-voiced nightingale is dusky brown,
While golden-plumaged birds no music own.

The ruby long outlives the scented rose;
But then the ruby no such fragrance knows.

From Egypt Moses did the people lead;
To plant in Canaan must be Joshua's deed.

If David laid all rich materials by,
His son first reared the gorgeous fane on high.

It did but once and unto One compete,
All rays of glory round his head should meet.

LORD, many times I am aweary quite
Of mine own self, my sin, my vanity—
Yet be not Thou, or I am lost outright,
Weary of me.

And hate against myself I often bear,
And enter with myself in fierce debate :
Take Thou my part against myself, nor share
In that just hate.

Best friends might loathe us, if what things perverse
We know of our own selves, they also knew :
Lord, Holy One ! if Thou who knowest worse
Shouldst loathe us too !

'And Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone.'—EXOD. xxxiv. 29.

IF that in sight of God is great
Which counts itself for small,
We by that law humility
The chiefest grace must call ;
Which being such, not knows itself
To be a grace at all.

How glorious was that meekest man
In all eyes save his own,
When from his splendid countenance
On all the people shone
A glory insupportable,
Unto himself unknown.

THE DAY OF DEATH.

THOU inevitable day,
When a voice to me shall say—
'Thou must rise and come away ;

All thine other journeys past,
Gird thee, and make ready fast
For thy longest and thy last'—

Day deep-hidden from our sight
In impenetrable night,
Who may guess of thee aright ?

Art thou distant, art thou near ?
Wilt thou seem more dark or clear ?
Day with more of hope or fear ?

Wilt thou come, unseen before
Thou art standing at the door,
Saying, light and life are o'er ?

Or with such a gradual pace,
As shall leave me largest space
To regard thee face to face ?

Shall I lay my drooping head
On some loved lap, round my bed
Prayer be made and tears be shed ?

Or at distance from mine own,
Name and kin alike unknown,
Make my solitary moan ?

Will there yet be things to leave,
Hearts to which this heart must cleave,
From which parting it must grieve?

Or shall life's best ties be o'er,
And all loved ones gone before
To that other happier shore?

Shall I gently fall on sleep,
Death, like slumber, o'er me creep,
Like a slumber sweet and deep?

Or the soul long strive in vain,
To escape, with toil and pain,
From its half-divided chain?

Little skills it where or how,
If thou comest then or now,
With a smooth or angry brow;

Come thou must, and we must die—
Jesus, Saviour, stand Thou by,
When that last sleep seals our eye.

THE LAW OF LOVE.

See 2 Kings iv. 1–6.

POUR forth the oil, pour boldly forth,
It will not fail until
Thou failest vessels to provide,
Which it may freely fill.

But then, when such are found no more,
Though flowing broad and free
Till then, and nourished from on high,
It straightway staunched will be.

Dig channels for the streams of Love,
Where they may broadly run;
And Love has overflowing streams
To fill them every one.

But if at any time thou cease
Such channels to provide,
The very springs of Love for thee
Will soon be parched and dried.

For we must share, if we would keep,
That good thing from above;
Ceasing to give, we cease to have—
Such is the law of Love.

A GENIAL moment oft has given
What years of toil and pain,
Of long industrious toil, have striven
To win, and all in vain.

Yet count not, when thine end is won,
That labour merely lost ;
Nor say it had been wiser done
To spare the painful cost.

When heaped upon the altar lie
All things to feed the fire—
One spark alighting from on high—
The flames at once aspire ;

But those sweet gums and fragrant woods,
Its rich materials rare,
By tedious quest o'er lands and floods
Had first been gathered there.

IF there had anywhere appeared in space
Another place of refuge, where to flee,
Our hearts had taken refuge in that place,
And not with Thee.

For we against creation's bars had beat
Like prisoned eagles, through great worlds had sought
Though but a foot of ground to plant our feet,
Where Thou wert not.

And only when we found in earth and air,
In heaven or hell, that such might nowhere be—
That we could not flee from Thee anywhere,
We fled to Thee.

'DUST TO DUST.'

OH blessing wearing semblance of a curse,
We fear thee, thou stern sentence—yet to be
Linked to immortal bodies were far worse
Than thus to be set free.

For mingling with the life-blood through each vein
The venom of the serpent's bite has run,
And only thus might be expelled again—
Thus only health be won.

Shall we not then a gracious sentence own,
Now since the leprosy has fretted through
The entire house, that Thou wilt take it down,
And build it all anew?

Build it this time (since Thou wilt build again),
A holy house, where righteousness may dwell;
And we, though in the unbuilding there be pain,
Will still affirm,—'tis well.

FROM THE GREEK ANTHOLOGY.

How without dying to flee thee, O life? for thine are a thousand
Ills, and those most hard either to shun or to bear.
Pleasant is all which to nature thou owest, the land and the ocean,
Pleasant the stars and sun and the fair cirque of the moon.
All things else are sorrows and fears; and if any good thing
Fall to a man, then a sure penalty waits him anon.

TO A FRIEND.

THE courses of our lives, which side by side
Ran for some little while, are sundered now;
We meet not now, as once, day after day,
In pleasant intercourse to change our thoughts:
Yet I remember often that past time,
And all the thoughts which filled it; for just then
We were as merchants seeking goodly pearls,
Seeking one pearl of price; and when we read
In books of some, or met on life's highway,
Who had returned as from a fruitless quest,
Bringing these tidings only, that all lands
They had gone through, had searched the furthest coasts,
Wherever fame reported that such pearl
Was to be won, but still had nothing found,
And now believed not there was aught to find,
Our hearts would die within us, loath to leave
Their hope, which yet grew weaker day by day,
That somewhere was a key which should unlock
The many chambers of this human life,
A law harmoniously to reconcile
All the perplexed appearances of things,
A treasure which should make for ever rich
The finder: for slight profit then to us,
And little comfort might we draw from things
Wherein some found, or fancied that they found,
The immortal longings of their spirits slaked,
And all life's mystery lightened. What at best
The beautiful creations of man's art,
If resting not on some diviner ground
Than man's own mind that formed them,—at their best
What but the singing of a mournful dirge,
What but the scattering flowers upon the grave
Of his abandoned hopes and buried joys?

Oh miserable comfort ! loss is loss,
And death is death ; and after all is done,
After the flowers are scattered on the tomb,
After the singing of the sweetest dirge,
The mourner with his heart uncomforted,
Returning to his solitary home,
Thinks with himself, if any one had aught
Of stronger consolation, he should speak ;
If not, 'twere best for ever to hold peace.
Such, and no more, to us contemplating
The life of man, such, and no truer, seemed
The alleviations to be won from these,
Poor withering garlands flung upon a grave,
The mournful beauty of a couchant Sphinx,
Watching by some half-buried pyramid,
Or fallen column in the wilderness.

And Nature's self, our foster-mother dear,
What could she do for us? what help impart?
Or when we mourned as lonely orphans here,
Or fled unto her bosom, there to find
Pity and love, there were no beatings there,
There were no pulses in her cold cold heart ;
She had no happy family of love
In which to adopt us. Beauty without love,
How should it cherish or make less forlorn,
Yea, how should it not leave forlorner still,
The forlorn heart of man? so left it us,
Who gazed upon the incense-breathing flowers,
Trees and rejoicing rivers, suns and stars,
Keeping their courses in untroubled joy,
By sin unstained, by longings undisturbed;
While we, the first-fruits of creation, we,
For whose dear sake all lower things were made,
Mourned evermore. How often then they seemed
Like the hired servants whom the Prodigal

Bethought him of, as satisfied with bread,
While we, the children of our Father's house,
Were perishing with hunger far away.
What longing had we then to be as these,
To be as trees or flowers, as rocks or stones,
Glad might we have relinquished and put by
The burden of our immortality,
And all the drear prerogatives of man.

Or sometimes finding little nearer home,
That we should care to dwell with our own hearts,
We looked abroad, and spake of some bright dawn
Of happiness and freedom, peace and love,
Day long desired, and now about to break
On all the nations; yet the while we felt
That we were speaking false and hollow words,—
For how should one, despairing of himself,
Find hope for others? where no centre is,
Centre established sure of life and joy,
What is it but an idle thing to draw
The widest circle of imagined good
At distance round us? where 'tis ill with each,
How vain to hope it should be well with all!

But now, though not to outward change we look
For the fulfilling of that glorious hope,
Have we renounced that hope?—or is it grown
A less substantial vision, because now
No fabled world, imagined isles beyond
The limitary ocean, such as never
Have been but in the longing of man's heart,
Not these now occupy our hearts and hopes;
But Eden and the New Jerusalem,
The garden and the city of our God,
The things which have been and shall be again,
Fill up the prospect upon either side,
Before us and behind? or have we left

Our love for Nature, now to love her less,
Since we have learned that all we so admire
Is only as her soiled and weekday dress,
And nothing to the glory she shall wear,
When for the coming sabbath of the world
She shall put on her festival attire—
Or closed our hearts to what of beautiful
Man by strong spell and earnest toil has won
To take intelligible forms of art,
Now that all these are recognized to be
Desires and yearnings, feeling after Him,
And by Him only to be satisfied,
Who is Himself the eternal Loveliness?

A PASSAGE FROM ST. AUGUSTINE.

WERT thou a wanderer on a foreign strand,
Who yet couldst only in thy native land
Find peace or joy or any blessëd thing—
And, thy sore travail to an end to bring,
Shouldst thither now determine to return,
Since in all other places doomed to mourn—
But having need of carriages for this,
To bring thee to thy country and true bliss,
What if the pleasant motion which they made,
With the fair prospects on each side displayed,
Should so attract thee, thou at last wert fain
The things for use lent only, to retain;
Entangled so with their perverse delight,
That from thy country alienated quite,
And its true joys whereto thou first didst tend,
And loathing to approach thy journey's end,
Thou shouldst be now a pilgrim with the fear
Lest thy long pilgrimage's close were near—
If this way it fared with thee, we might say,
Thou didst man's life unto the life portray.

TO POETRY.

IN my life's youth, while yet the deeper needs
Of the inmost spirit unawakened were,
Thou couldst recount of high heroic deeds,
Couldst add a glory unto earth and air,
A crowning glory, making fair more fair:
So that my soul was pleased and satisfied,
Which had as yet no higher, deeper care,
And said that thou shouldst evermore abide
With me, and make my bliss, and be my spirit's bride.

But years went on, and thoughts which slept before,
O'er the horizon of my soul arose—
Thoughts which perplexed me ever more and more;
As though a Sphinx should meet one, and propose
Enigmas hard, and which whoso not knows
To interpret, must her prey and victim be;
And I, round whom thick darkness seemed to close,
Knew only this one thing, that misery
Remained, if none could solve this riddle unto me.

Then I remembered that from thy lips fell
Large words of promise, how thou couldst succeed
All darkest mysteries of life to spell;
Therefore I pleaded with thee now to read
The riddle that was baffling me, with speed,
To yield some answer to the questioning.
Something thou spak'st, but nothing to my need,
So that I counted thee an idle thing,
Who, having promised much, couldst no true succour bring.

And I turned from thee, and I left thee quite,
And of thy name to hear had little care :
For I was only seeking if by flight
I might shun *her*, who else would rend and tear
Me, who could not her riddle dark declare :—
This toil, the anguish of this flight was mine,
Until at last, enquiring everywhere,
I won an answer from another shrine,
A holier oracle, a temple more divine.

But when no longer without hope I mourned,
When peace and joy revived in me anew,
Even from that moment my old love returned,
My former love, yet wiser and more true,
As seeing what for us thy power can do,
And what thy skill can make us understand
And know—and where that skill attained not to :
How far thou canst sustain us by thy hand,
And what things shall in us a holier care demand—

My love of thee and thine ; for earth and air,
And every common sight of sea and plain,
Then put new robes of glory on, and wear
The same till now ; and things which dead had lain
Revived, as flowers that smell the dew and rain :
I was a man again of hopes and fears,
The fountains of my heart flowed forth again,
Whose sources had seemed dry for many years,
And there was given me back the sacred gift of tears.

And that old hope, which never quite had perished,
A longing which had stirred me from a boy,
And which in darkest seasons I had cherished,
Which nothing could quite vanquish or destroy,

This with all other things of life and joy
Revived within me—and I too would seek
The power, that moved my own heart, to employ
On others, who perchance would hear me speak,
If but the tones were true, although the voice were weak.

Though now there seems one only worthy aim
For poet,—that my strength were as my will!—
And which renounce he cannot without blame—
To make men feel the presence by his skill
Of an eternal loveliness, until
All souls are faint with longing for their home,
Yet the same while are strengthened to fulfil
Their task on earth, that they may surely come
Unto the land of life, who here as exiles roam.

And what though loftiest fancies are not mine,
Nor words of chiefest power, yet unto me
Some voices reach out of the inner shrine,
Heard in mine heart of hearts, and I can see
At times some glimpses of the majesty,
Some prints and footsteps of the glory trace,
Which have been left on earth, that we might be
By them led forward to the secret place,
Where we perchance might see that glory face to face.

If in this quest, O power of sacred song,
Thou canst assist,—oh, never take thy flight!
If thou canst make us gladder or more strong,
If thou canst fling glimpses of glorious light
Upon life's deepest depth and highest height,
Or pour upon its low and level plain
A gleam of mellower gladness, if this might
Thou hast—(and it is thine)—then not in vain
Are we henceforth prepared to follow in the train.

GENOVEVA.

I.

AS the finest crystal still
Bides the most exposed to ill,
As the finest crystal ever,
Brittlest, may the soonest shiver,
So in this world fares no less
With some rarer happiness:
Such a happiness was thine,
Siegfried, Count and Palatine,
When thou leddest home thy bride,
When thou watchedst her in pride,
As all eyes did on her wait,
Moving in her queenly state—
Genoveva, loveliest flower
Blooming in Brabantine bower
Once, and now transferred to dwell
On the banks of fair Moselle.
'Twas in sooth a golden time,
And the world was in its prime
For them two;—the sun stood high
Of their rare felicity—
Standing right above their head,
Did no way a shadow shed.
But this might not always last;
Happy months too soon have past:
Charles has called from east and west
All who own his high behest;
Charles has bid from far and near
All his liegemen to appear.
For must now at length be met,
Now must have its limits set,

That wild tide of Moslem war,
Which has rolled so fierce and far,
Issuing from Arabian sands,
Overflowing mightiest lands,
Till it reached to western Spain,
And has burst o'er Aquitaine,
And is panting to advance
To the very heart of France.
At the gate are trumpets sounding,
And impatient chargers bounding,
And a numerous proud array
Only for their chieftain stay;
And he comes; in lady's bowers
'Tis no time to waste the hours.
Who this precious time would choose
In ignoble ease to lose,
While by others fields are fought,
Glorious deeds by others wrought,
While by other hearts and hands
France is freed from miscreant bands?
Nor would she her lord detain,
Though her arms are like a chain,
That will scarce relax again;
Though when now the latest note
Of the trump in air doth float,
By her maidens she is found
Without motion on the ground,
In a deep and heavy swoon;
But from thence reviving soon
Doth her widowed state beguile,
Cheers the sad and lonely while,
Not with shows or pageantries,
Not with pomps or revelries,
But with prayer and vigil long,
With the Church's solemn song,
Stirring so the malice fell
And the deepest hate of hell.

II.

Well thou farest, gallant Count,
Foremost in the battle brunt,
Foremost on that famous field,
When to heaven two faiths appealed,
When seven times uprose the sun,
And the battle was not done,
And six times went down the day
On an undecided fray;
Well thou speedest; to thy king
No mean help thy hand did bring
On that last day, when he smote
Many a Moslem's mailëd coat,
When his ponderous blows so well
Like on ringing anvil fell,
That to him henceforth the name
Of 'The Hammer' justly came.
Well thou farest—better far
Than that sadly-gleaming star,
Thou didst leave to shine alone
In thy sphere, when thou wert gone—
Better than that lonely dove,
Fond of heart, and true of love,
Who within her widowed bowers
Counts the tardy-pacing hours.
What a mist of hell obscure
Gathers round thy planet pure!
What a serpent coils and clings
Round thy fair dove's silver wings!
What of hellish wiles are met
Round about her, to beset
First the honour, then the life
Of that ever-faithful wife!
Ill didst thou, O Count, provide,
Setting at thy lady's side,

For thine holy home to guard
And to keep due watch and ward,
One who there such watch doth keep
As the wolf on silly sheep:
Such a guard the kite would prove
To the weakness of the dove.
Evil man! who when there fell
On his bosom sparks of hell,
Did not, as alone was meet,
Stamp them underneath his feet,
With an indignation keen
That such thoughts should once have been;
But those sparks of foul desire
Left to kindle to a fire,
Fed and fanned them, till they grew
Such a mighty flame unto,
As will not be quenched, before
One it has consumed, or more.
—He has dared to tell his tale;
She, with fear and anger pale,
Twice must hear, but when the third
Time this suit of shame she heard,
Then exclaimed, 'Thy lord shall know
Whom he has entrusted so:
Evil meed wilt thou have earned,
When thy lord has back returned;
Twice forgiven—but twice in vain—
Hence! nor see my face again.'
Forth the caitiff went, and told
To his mother, weird and old,
Full of evil plots and wiles,
Full of treacheries and guiles,
All his danger and his fear—
—'Help me, or my death is near;
Give me counsel, or I die:
One must perish—she or I.'

III.

Innocence is fearless still ;
Means not and suspects not ill.
Of the band that waited near
Genoveva, one was dear,
For his piety beloved,
And with many signs approved
Of her grace : his tender age
Did he unto God engage,
Who, before her kneeling, read
From an open scroll outspread,
Where were written records high
Of the Christian chivalry ;
Of young Agnes, tender flower,
Gathered in her childhood's hour ;
And of patient Laurence, spread
Calmly on his fiery bed ;
Of Eulalia, whose fair corse,
Flung abroad without remorse,
From the care of heaven must know
Its pure winding-sheet of snow ;
And of them that bore so well
All the spite of earth and hell,
Whose dear ashes forth were thrown
To make rich her neighbouring Rhone ;
And of many more beside,
In extremest tortures tried ;
Names that never shall grow old,
Hearts to servile fear unsold,
Holy Virgins, Martyrs bold,
Lilies those of dazzling white,
Roses these with red hues dight,
In the garden of the Lord ;—
With a pensive ear she heard,

With a spirit inly wrought,
Marvelling in secret thought,
How the holiest and most pure
Most were given to endure;
How it still was theirs to drain
Deepest cups of mortal pain.
But these musings must have end,
Must reveal what they portend.
Hark! a noise is heard without,
Then a rude inrushing rout,
Led of him who should no more
Dare to stand her face before.
Up she started in surprise;
All the coming on her eyes
Flashing in a moment rose—
The long order of her woes,
The foul tale, the hateful lie,
And the deep-laid villany.
Knew she now what cup of pain
Unto her was given to drain;
Her as well that cup had found,
Had unto her lips come round.
'Ha!' that faithless guardian cried,
When the wondering twain he spied,
'It was this, even this I thought,
And my fears to proof are brought.
Have we not endured this wrong
Done against our lord too long?
Hence, away with both! away!
Hence, nor heed them, what they say;
Mine the charge, that without stain
My lord's honour should remain:
If this may not be, at least
Shall the rank offence have ceased.
Bear him to his death—her doom
She shall wait in dungeon gloom.'

IV.

Such a mist of hell obscure
Gathers round that planet pure,
Such a serpent coils and clings
Round that fair dove's silver wings,
Such of hellish wiles are met,
And such treacheries to beset
First the honour, then the life
Of that ever-faithful wife;
While the Count do spaces wide,
Streams and mountains, still divide
From his perilled lady's side.
For with slow and sullen pace,
Turning oftentimes the face,
Afric's swarthy hosts retreat
From the field of their defeat;—
As with many a pause of pride
Ebbeth a reluctant tide,
Slowly on its refluent track,
Is with many a pause drawn back,
Oft with new-awakened roar
Winning ground again, before
It has quite left bare the shore—
As a lion from his prey
By the hunters scared away,
Who though now no more remaining,
Yet the show of flight disdaining,
Often turns, and makes his stand,
Glares on the pursuing band,
Till the shepherds back recoil,
Winning no unbloody spoil.
And the gallant Count of Treves,
Though by night and day he weaves
Visions of his happy home,
Though full oft his fancies roam

From the camp's tumultuous noise,
From the battle's heady joys,
To the banks of fair Moselle,
Where for him all good things dwell,
Though he yearns for quick release
Unto scenes of holy peace,
Yet will faithfully abide
By his noble captain's side,
Till into the western seas,
Or beyond the Pyrenees,
Is the latest foeman urged,
And the land is throughly purged.
  Joy to him! for tidings come,
Letters from his distant home.
Joy it is not; he doth stand,
Those crushed letters in his hand,
And men speak, but meaning none
From their speech his ear has won;
O'er the world doth blackness pass,
Black the sunlight on the grass,
Black the sun itself—on all
Blackness falls, a murky pall.
The firm heavens are round him wheeling,
The fixed earth beneath him reeling;
Oh, the cunning web of hell:
Oh, the treachery woven too well!
—'Genoveva! oh no, no—
Yet it is, it must be so.
Oh 'twas well and bravely done,
Thou thy master's praise hast won,
Who didst boldly use thy power
And didst cast her in that hour
To a dungeon out of sight.
Would that she had died outright,
Died with him, and shared his fate,
In this sin her guilty mate.

Better so—but let her die
With the child of infamy,
Child of infamy and scorn
That was in the dungeon born.'
With this message he in part
The wild tumult of his heart
Has assuaged—some ease has won :
—Yet, oh think, was this well done,
Was it with thine own heart well,
When in it such thoughts could dwell?
If thy spirit had drawn breath
In the worlds of loftiest faith,
Couldst thou have been so deceived?—
Wouldst thou not have then believed
Everything on earth, a lie
Ere thy lady's purity?

V.

Lo! a woman strangely fair,
With her wildly-streaming hair,
All alone, companionless,
In a savage wilderness :—
Now she kneels with arms stretched out,
Now she strangely roams about ;
Underneath a thorn-tree's shade
Wailing infant she has laid,
Like another Hagar flying,
That she may not see him dying.
—'From that cry—that cry of pain—
Still I flee, but still in vain :
Whither, whither shall I fly?
All the fountains are drawn dry
Of my bosom utterly ;
With its milk my child at first,
Till that wholly failed, I nursed :

Then the blood away it drew,
And now that has failed me too.
Oh ! what helps it that the twain,
Who were charged to end my pain,
Have withheld the murderous knife
From my own and infant's life,
(While I promised never more
To appear men's eyes before,)
If they leave us here to die
With a longer agony ?
—O my husband, other thought
Was it that within me wrought,
Then when from my height of place
Fell I to that strange disgrace,
And that scorn extreme must prove :
In thy faith and in thy love
Found I still a refuge strong
From that uttermost of wrong.
'Twas enough the hours were flowing,
'Twas enough the days were going,
That would bring thee to my side,
All that dark mist scattering wide.
—God and Saviour ! and thine ear
Doth it not our crying hear ?
God and Saviour ! is thine eye
Closëd on our misery ?
Are the springs of love divine
Dry as are these breasts of mine ?
When my little one has died,
What have I on earth beside ?'
Round she gazed, if anywhere
Dawned a glimpse of comfort there :
Not a human step was near,
Not a human voice to cheer,
And no Angel-comforter
In her anguish spake to her.

Oh ! how darkly desolate,
Oh ! how full of scorn and hate
At that moment seemed all nature—
Every mute and senseless creature ;
All upon her misery
Gazing with unpitying eye.
Danced the light leaves in the air,
As deriding her despair ;
Echoes came in idle mocks,
Tossed from the unfeeling rocks ;
Merrily the stream tripped on,
Gloriously the gay sun shone,
Stretched the breadth of azure sky
Like a banner upon high :
But no pity anywhere
Might she find, no love, no care :
Dark the earth, forlorn of love,
But, oh ! darker heaven above—
God's own heaven seemed darker yet.
But this deadliest thought is met :
She hath prayed, and doth repel
This the deadliest shaft of hell ;
She hath prayed, and not in vain ;
Faith returns to her again ;
And when now the feeble crying,
The faint moanings of the dying,
Faint and fainter, wholly cease,
God she thanks that all is peace ;
That her infant findeth rest
On a loving Saviour's breast.
She with all is reconciled ;
Once will look upon her child,
Then its little body lay
In the deepest grave she may.
Near she draws, and yet more near,
Not a stirring may she hear :

But what other sight her eyes
Welcomed with a glad surprise !
Near the boy a gentle doe
Knelt, as white as mountain snow,
And with eager lips the child
From that loving creature mild
Drew the sweetest nourishment,
Which, for its own offspring sent,
Now to him it freely lent.
When the mother from above
Bent on him her looks of love,
He at length began to stir,
Did his little hands to her
Stretch, and turn in gladsome wise
On her face his laughing eyes ;
What sweet tears from hers were shed !
What new faith in her was bred !
Here will she abide, until
Life shall finish, and life's ill.
Housing in a hollow cave,
Shelter when the wild winds rave ;
Here, where God this grace did send,
She will calmly wait the end.

VI.

Blindly, blindly, in the dark
Welters now his spirit's bark,
Who has blotted from his heaven
All the lights to guide him given,
So that now there doth endure
Unto him no good, no pure,
And no virtue seemeth sure ;
While the fairest form wherein
Goodness did a body win,
Leprous all have showed with sin ;

While the Star which he well nigh
Worshipped, where it shone on high,
Suddenly has left its height,
Treacherous meteor of the night.
Round his path is darkness spread ;
But what thicker night is shed
Then, when he is undeceived,
And has all the web unweaved
Of that hateful treachery,
Of that foul and hideous lie ;
When the traitor owns his guilt
And his blood is justly spilt—
And a murderer *thou* dost stand,
With her blood upon thy hand !
Oh ! what profits now the force
Of thy measureless remorse ?
What thy soul's strong agonies ?
What thy tears of blood, thy cries
Underneath the midnight skies ?
What a thousand anguished years,
An eternity of tears ?
All were profitless to rue
What a single hour could do.
Wilt thou call her from the tomb ?
Wilt thou bid her from the gloom
Of that forest, where she lies
Hidden deep from human eyes ?
Faithful mother ! truest wife !
Hardly she sustains her life
In that wasteful wilderness :
Oh unparalleled distress !
Who that paints it to his thought,
Would not unto tears be brought ?
She, a child of Flanders' Earl,
Lacking what the meanest churl,

Poorest beggar that did wait
At her sire's or husband's gate,
Had not lacked,—of which bereft
She had not the meanest left.
Changed she has her palace dome
For a cave of damp and gloom;
Maidens wait not her about,
But wild beasts go in and out;
And no other music more
Knows she than their sullen roar;
For a soft and downy bed
Sticks are underneath her spread;
She has left her dainty food
For the harsh roots of the wood;
Pearls she has not; in their place
Tears are on her woe-worn face:
Only jewels now she knew
Were the drops of chilly dew,
Hanging on the pointed thorn:
This is now her state forlorn.
  While the days are summer-long
Then her pains are not so strong;
While the days are summer-warm,
She may shield her child from harm.
Oh! but when the leaves now sere
Told of pitiless winter near,
How she shuddered then to know
What she soon must undergo!
Ill with her it then did fare,
Then her pains were hard to bear.
She must melt within her mouth
Ice, when she would slake her drouth;
When her hunger would allay,
Must the hard snow scrape away,
Till the roots at length she found,
Buried deep in frozen ground.

How amid the long nights dark,
When the cold was stiff and stark,
When the icy north-wind blew,
Keen sword, piercing through and through,
Searching, as it fiercely drave,
Every corner of the cave,
Oh ! how then that mother pressed
Her poor shiverer to her breast.
Though no moisture that could give,
Warmth not any there did live ;
And herself forgetting quite,
Wailed for that poor shuddering wight ;
Who, beholding her to weep,
And that long low wail to keep,
Wailed and wept himself as well,
Though his grief he could not tell.
Yet amid her keenest ill,
She in God found comfort still ;
And when day by day the doe
Through the ice and through the snow
Came—a constant visitant,
To that poor child ministrant,—
Blest assurance, token clear
Of his grace she welcomed here :—
It may be, now thanked Him more
Than she ever thanked before,
Could his wondrous guidance praise,
That had from the world's vain ways,
From its flatteries and its wiles,
From its heart-deluding smiles
Her delivered, and had brought,
By rough paths she had not sought—
But which now she could discern,
And their gracious meaning learn—
To this shelter safe, though stern.

VII.

Mourned this painful hermitess
Of the lonely wilderness,—
Lowly kneeling, mourned one day,
Did with eyes uplifted pray.
In a trance-like agony
Sunken, when she seemed to see,
From that bright superior coast,
One of its angelic host
Stooping toward her ;—awful fear
In his visage did appear,
And his front was bent before
That which in his hand he bore :
Only hands of Angels aught
Lovely as that cross had wrought,
With the image there suspended,
In which Love and Death contended:
And this cross he reached to her,—
This angelic comforter ;
And her agony beguiled
With these soothing words and mild :
'Genoveva, take thou this,
Take it for the boon it is.
Choicest blessing, costliest boon,
That God's treasure-house doth own,
Gift He keepeth for his friends,
And to thee at this time sends.
Hither be thy glances sent,
When thy soul with pangs is rent ;
Set on this thine eyes and heart,
When impatient movements start ;
This shall as a shield repel
All the fiery darts of hell ;
This shall prove a golden key,
Heaven unlocking unto thee.'

Was it vision? was it truth?
Dream, or very waking sooth?
Did a heavenly Messenger,
Did an Angel talk with her?
She hath started from her trance,
Round she flings a timorous glance;
There doth no one now appear
By her side, far off or near:
Yet in rocky niche upright,
Plain before her waking sight,
Lo! a crucifix—it stands
Beauteous, as if angel hands
Had that ivory work divine
Wrought into salvation's sign.
This in summer she alway
Did adorn with flowery may,
Ever decked it as she could
With the wild flowers of the wood;
Nor in barest winter left
Of all ornament bereft,
But with mosses would entwine,
Or with dark unfading pine.
Here her solace found she still
In extremities of ill,
In her Saviour's five wounds laid
All her griefs, her anguish stayed:
Here, when once she did complain,
Uttering words of hasty pain,
'Jesu, Saviour, what is this?
What have I so much amiss
Wrought, how sinnëd against Thee
More than all, that I should be
For a vile adulteress
Driven into this wilderness,
To this anguish and this shame?'

Seemed it then that accents came
From that cross, and named her name!
'Genoveva, is it well
At my chastening to rebel?
Are thy sufferings more than mine?
Or had I more guilt than thine?
Yet was I put forth from heaven,
By my Father I was given
To my cross and mortal woe:
Look on Me, and looking, so
Learn to bear thy present ill,
And what thou must suffer still.'
This her Saviour's mild rebuke
To her heart with shame she took,
And no word of discontent,
Whatsoever griefs He sent,
Did she ever speak again,
But her passion and her pain
Did with meekest heart sustain,
Yea, did welcome and approve
For the gifts of highest love.
  Then she found how wildest creatures—
How the wild wood's savage natures
At Heaven's bidding could be made
Ministers to yield her aid;
Came the wolf, yet not to harm,
But a shaggy sheepskin warm
In his teeth one day he bore:
This he cast the child before,
In its woolly folds henceforth
Shielded from the bitterest north;
And the beasts to him grew tame,
Round him without fear they came;
Came the gentle creatures near,
Without fierceness, without fear;
As he wandered through the wood,

With their speaking gestures showed
What were harmful herbs and good,—
With the boy made pastime; he
Of the wilderness was free—
Rode upon the wolf, and played
With the swift hare on the glade;
Round his head the birds would flit,
On his hand the birds alit;
And the mother and the child
Of their misery oft beguiled
With melodious descants wild.
And as he to more years grew
Lacked she not some comfort new;
Sweetest words with him she changed,
Whence her heart was oft estranged
From the grief which on it lay,—
Taught him in what words to pray,
How he should 'Our Father' say,
And his little hands above
Lift unto a God of love,
Who was watching for them still,
Who, in midst of all their ill,
For the desolate had cared:—
Thus with them long while it fared.

VIII.

But the Count, whom prosperous hours
Back to his ancestral towers
Bring, and to his widowed bowers,
How shall he, this lone man, bear
The approach and entrance there?
Lonely man! though at his side
Troops of friends and vassals ride;
Lonely man! though at his gate
Him ten thousand welcomes wait;

Heart unwelcomed home, although
Thousand voices skyward go;
Thousand voices fill the air,
But the one is lacking there.
How shall he endure to pace
Those long echoing halls, and trace
Each remembered happy place,
Haunted each with its own ghost
Of some ancient splendour lost,
Each with its own vision bright
Of some forfeited delight
Rising clear upon his sight?
How beside a cold hearth stand,
Quenched by his own reckless hand?
He has borne it, man forlorn!
Borne—for all things may be borne;
And he lives, nor freedom asks
From life's ordinary tasks,
Him though oft the crowded hall,
And the thronging festival,
With that dreariest sense oppress
Of a peopled wilderness;
Though the crowds that to and fro
On their busy errands go,
Ofttimes seem with all their tasks
But so many gibbering masks;
Though he oft must contemplate
The strange mockeries of fate,
Which with hand profuse had shed
Gifts so many on his head,
Which had lent him splendour, fame,
And a glory round his name,
Honour, due to him whose hand
Helped to free his native land,
Yet withdrew the single thing
Which to all a worth would bring.—

And the years give no relief,
Mellowing an austerer grief:
But a melancholy dim,
Darker and darker, fell on him.
Round him, when his state they knew,
Friends and faithful kinsmen drew
With consoling words and speech,
Which his heart's wound cannot reach:
Yet he strives not, when the morn
They will greet with hawk and horn;
Still he yields a sad consent,
Is with everything content,
Feast, or chase, or tournament.
'Brother,' so to him one day
Did his faithful kinsman say—
'Oft a milk-white hind is seen
On that belt of tender green,
Skirting the dark forest vast
We so many times have past;
Seen it flieth, but with flight
As it would pursuit invite;
Though remaining unpursued
In that deep and haunted wood
To this hour;—with hound and horn
We will rouse to-morrow morn:
And methinks we shall not there
Fail to find some quarry rare,
That or other, which shall greet
Friends that here to-morrow meet.'

IX.

It is day;—with hound and horn
They have roused that morrow morn—
Have the milk-white creature found
On that edge of grassy ground—

And with eager steps pursued
Far into the gloomy wood;
Till the hunters, one by one,
By the length of way foredone,
Rein their steeds—but onward still,
Thorough brake and over hill,
Down steep glen, through foaming river,
Doth Count Siegfried follow ever.
Wild and wilder grows the scene,
Seems it step of man hath been
Never in this savage place:
He too now foregoes the chase,
For he sees another sight
Which hath shook him with the might,
Brave albeit, of strange affright.
—'Who art thou, by none befriended,
Only of that hind attended,
Which has fled with steps so fleet
To the refuge of thy feet—
Housing in the desert's heart,
From all Christian souls apart?
Who art thou? come forth and tell
If a sprite of heaven or hell?'
—'Shall I in thy sight appear,
Cast me in thy mantle here,
Else I cannot without blame
Stand before thee;'—forth she came
Wrapt in it; there stood also
By her side the fearless doe;
—'Here of free choice dwell I not,
But have still my God besought
He would guide of his good grace
Human steps to this drear place.
He has heard those prayers of mine,
And has guided even thine.

What of me thou fain wouldst know,
I too willingly will show—
I this wretched and forlorn
Woman, in Brabant was born ;
No ignoble stock was mine,
For I came of princely line ;
But must find in worst distress
Shelter in this wilderness,
When my husband erringly
Of my truth misdeemed, and me
With my infant would have then
Slain by hands of evil men.'
Then exceeding tremblings came
Over all Count Siegfried's frame.
On her face a fixed regard
Turned he—that was all so marred
He could read no history there—
'But thy name and his declare :'
—'If my own self I have not,
As the world has me, forgot,
I am Genoveva hight.'
From his steed he fell outright
On the moment when she came
To the syllabling that name,
Down upon his face he fell,
As by stroke invisible
Earthward smitten—there lay long,
And his sobs were thick and strong,
Choking utterance—till his head
He a little raising, said :
'Genoveva, can it be
That I now should look on thee,
Thee, my own, my murdered wife,
Genevieve, my love, my life?
Oh how wan ! how worn ! how weak
Oh that eye ! that sunken cheek !

Oh the utter misery
That my guilt has brought on thee!
Canst thou, Genevieve, forgive?
Wilt thou bid this wretch to live?
Low before thy feet I lie;
Thousand deaths if I should die,
And in each a thousand years,—
Drain my heart's blood out in tears,
All were nothing to my sin—
Then free pardon let me win:
Pardon for his sake I crave,
Who upon his cross forgave.'
—'O my husband, all is past,
God is good, and He at last
Of his grace has brought this day.
If thou wishest, I will say
That I pardon—rise, oh rise!
With these sobs and agonies
Thou wilt kill my heart outright;
See too who appears in sight—
O my sweet child, come, you may
Fling those herbs and roots away.
Fear not, sweetest, you will find
That the man is good and kind.'
—'Cause too just he has to fear;
Oh to think ye two were here
All this while, and I so near!
Thou, and he whom I am bold
To a father's heart to fold.'
But enough, what words can tell
Of a joy unspeakable?—
Of the trancëd long embrace,
(In his bosom hid her face,)
With its gush of mingling tears,
Worth a thousand torturing years.
Others have arrived, to share
In the holy gladness there;

Through the forest tidings fly,
And all draw in wonder nigh.
Near her timidly they draw,
And they kiss her feet in awe,
While to them she doth appear
Creature of another sphere.
Faith they scarcely will afford
To the assurance of the lord,
'Tis their mistress lost so long,
Overliving all her wrong.
Now a litter is in haste
Of green branches interlaced,
And on it their lady borne,
By her grief and joy outworn.
Yet or ever from that spot,
From that stern and rugged grot,
Genoveva turned away,
Lowly kneeling will she pay
Thankful vows from grateful heart,
Ere she from that cave depart,
For the mercy and the grace
Which had found her in that place,
Kissed with tears the holy rood,
Where in rocky niche it stood—
—'Fare thee well!—I leave thee here,
For so many memories dear,
Thou a shield that didst repel
All the fiery darts of hell,
Thou that wast a golden key,
Heaven unlocking unto me.
With these tears once more I say,
Fare thee well—I go away,
But what here has been my gain
May it with me still remain!'
To the castle now doth hie
A rejoicing company,

While from village and from town
Others stream to meet them soon ;
As in triumph one doth bear
High in arms the new-found heir ;
Round his head the glad birds flit,
Singing on his hand they sit,
Glad farewells they seem to sing,
His new fortunes welcoming.
Nor doth not the fearless doe
In the glad procession go,
Has its own peculiar dower
In the glory of this hour :
Round it shouting children press,
Smooth its sides with fond caress,
Kiss its face, and slender neck
With their flowery garlands deck,
While all praise the gentle hind,
And its ministrations kind.

X.

Joy is in Count Siegfried's bowers,
Joy upon those ancient towers,
Festal gladness in the room
Of that weight of brooding gloom ;
Nor doth she whose presence bright
Chased the darkness of that night,
Bringing back return of light,
In this joy refuse her share :—
Yet another, holier care
Fills her heart—how best to keep
Those heights difficult and steep,
Which her spirit did attain
In its years of desert pain—
Him her pattern still to own,
Wearer of the thorny crown.

To the Count, as more he knows,
Ever loftier wonder grows
At her saintly virtues high—
Aye a sadder certainty,
That he will not long retain
His new-won and glorious gain.
She doth meekly undertake
All life's tasks for his dear sake ;
Yet she evermore doth seem
Like one moving in a dream,
Or as one called back from death,
Strangely drawing vital breath ;
All so wondrous does the stir
Of our life appear to her ;
All so little to her mind
Can she now its pageants find.
And not many months have been,
Ere of every eye 'tis seen
That the hour is nearly come,
When the weary one will home ;
Ere too plain the work appears
Of those cruel wasting years.
Every day her pale pale face
Wears a more unearthly grace :
Angel wings are o'er her head,
Angel feet about her bed :
She doth catch in trances high
Heaven's transcending harmony ;
Enters by heaven's golden doors,
Treads upon heaven's sapphire floors,
And clear voices do not cease
Warning her of near release—
Sounds she may interpret well,
Wherefore sent, and what they tell ;
Yet to him will not impart,
That she may not rend his heart :

For what anguish had they brought
To his soul, who well had thought
To atone that mighty wrong
By a life of service long,
By long years of service true
And devotion ever new—
But must now see torn and scattered,
By this stroke for ever shattered,
That fond vision, by whose art
He had many times in part
Spoken peace unto his heart.

XI.

Gently speak and lightly tread,
'Tis the chamber of the dead :
Now thine earthly course is run,
Now thy weary day is done,
Genoveva, sainted one !
Happy flight thy sprite has taken,
From its plumes earth's last dust shaken ;
On the earth is passionate weeping,
Round thy bier lone vigils keeping,—
In the heaven triumphant songs,
Welcome of angelic throngs,
As thou enterest on that day,
Which no tears nor fears allay,
No regrets nor pangs affray,
Hemmed not in by yesterday,
By to-morrow hemmed not in.
Weep not for her—she doth win
What we long for ; now is she
That which all desire to be.
Bear her forth with solemn cheer,
Bear her forth on open bier,
That the wonder which hath been
May of every eye be seen.

Wonderful! that pale worn brow
Death hath scarcely sealed, and now
All the beauty that she wore
In the youthful years before,
All the freshness and the grace,
And the bloom upon her face,
Ere that seven-yeared distress
In the painful wilderness,
Ere that wasting sickness came,
Undermining quite her frame,
All come back—the light, the hue
Tinge her cheek and lip anew:
Far from her, oh! far away,
All that is so quick to say,
'Man returneth to his clay:'
All that to our creeping fear
Whispers of corruption near.
Seems it as she would illume
With her radiance and her bloom
The dark spaces of the tomb.

XII.

Once again thou art alone,
From that other sorrow thrown
All too quickly upon this:
Oh, few days of fleeting bliss!
Where shall they who fain would speak
Comfort now, the mourner seek?
'Mid his old ancestral towers,
His twice-desolated bowers?
On the battle-fields of Spain,
Where the hardy Goths maintain
Their Asturian mountains well,
Thrusting back the infidel?
Rather in the deep recess
Of a pathless wilderness,

Out of knowledge, out of sight,
Seek a lonely eremite.
Him has good Hidulphus blest,
Praised his purpose, and his quest
(Even before this life shall close)
Of a place of sure repose.
So a church in that wild wood
Rises, where that cross had stood :
Underneath the altar high
Genoveva's relics lie :
And that cross, of Angel hands
Wrought, above the altar stands.
He, within a rugged grot,
In the very self-same spot
Where she saw those cruel years,
Where she wept those many tears,
Dwells—where Genoveva dwelt,
Kneels—where Genoveva knelt ;
From the self-same spring doth take
Water for his thirst to slake,
Often knows no other food
Than the wild roots of the wood ;
Well content to undergo
Some small portion of the woe,
Which so long he made her know,
There he waits for his release,
There in God finds perfect peace :—
Till the long years end at last,
And he too at length has past
From the sorrow and the fears,
From the anguish and the tears,
From the desolate distress
Of this world's great loneliness,
From the withering and the blight,
From the shadow of its night,
Into God's pure sunshine bright.

THE STEADFAST PRINCE.

'Only the best composed and worthiest hearts
God sets to act the hard'st and constant'st parts.'—DANIEL.

PART I.

OF all the princes that in lofty place
With lowly virtues did adornëd stand,
Whom better did these lowly virtues grace
Than all their worldly state, might none demand
A nobler meed of praise than Ferdinand,
Brother of him whose sceptre ruled of old,
Where Tagus pours its waves o'er sands of gold.

He knew no higher gladness than to tend
The poor, the needy, whom uncomforted
Not ever from his portals he would send,
Whom sick he watched beside contagious bed,
And whom an-hungered his large bounty fed ;
While loving words made ever doubly prized
The gracious acts which he for all devised.

And only was he rigid and severe
With his own self, his weak frame chastening still
With long-drawn fasts and discipline austere,
With vigils which the long night-watches fill :
Yet leaving not to gain all knightly skill
In lists of arms, arrayed in knightly weeds,
Against some coming day of martial deeds.

For like a clear flame in his bosom burned,
As on a holy altar, fiery zeal,
Though not for meeds of earthly fame he yearned,
Nor willingly for these had bared his steel;
But greatly longed some land that now might feel
The yoke of misbelieving men, once more
To his Redeemer's kingdom to restore.

He, long restricted to unwelcome ease,
To see renewed his father's glories yearned,
Who with two hundred vessels crossed the seas,
And for himself a noble title earned,
As first who to the infidels returned
The wrongs they wrought on Spain, and with high hand
Made Ceuta his, the key of all their land.

Oh day, when many a heart beat high and fast,
When his exultingly did bound and leap,
For that, despaired of long, was come at last;
Once more a gallant host was on the deep,
And every vessel did its due course keep
For Afric, and at each prow unconfined
A red-cross banner fluttered in the wind.

Far off, that fleet might seem a wandering troop
Of huge sea-monsters, gambolling at will
Upon the topmost surge; or clouds that stoop
And lean on ocean's breast, themselves to fill
With water which they back in rain distil;
Or flock of snow-white sea-birds, that expand
Huge never-wearied pinions, far from land.

Or now he might that goodly sight compare,
Who saw it from afar, to forest vast
In motion, that did all its pines upbear—
They tossing their tall heads, as every mast
Now rose, now yielded to the unsteady blast ;
Or might have deemed them, proudly thus advancing,
A city on the inconstant billows dancing.

Oh joy, when they, by tempests unassailed,
Set their firm feet upon the Libyan shore,
While loud and clear the holy hymn prevailed,
Which ofttimes heard in Palestine before,—
'The standards of the King advance,'—once more
Filled now the air, and seemed the prelude high
Of near success and certain victory.

—Long were it and a mournful task to tell
How this fair dawn of triumph was defaced
With wrack of envious clouds, and how befell,
And by whose fault, that with untimely haste
They were entangled in the desert waste ;
Wherein they deeper day by day were led,
Still deeming that the foe before them fled :

Till when the scorching heat of Afric's sun,
With alternating dews of chilly night,
And pain and travail had their office done,
And theirs already was an evil plight,
A dawning morning showed them every height
Crowned with innumerous hosts, that hemmed their way,
Then rushed to seize an unresisting prey.

Yet did not then that instant peril tame
The courage of that high heroic band :
The bold Crusaders, worthy that high name,
With dauntless front from morn to evening stand ;
Although when darkness did at length command
Brief truce from arms, the boldest needs must own
That to retrace their steps remained alone.

Back to their ships they wound in sad retreat,
Enveloped ever in a fiery cloud
Of dust and burning sand, which by their feet
Stirred, hung around them like a dismal shroud :
And choked by agony of thirst, they crowd
Round scanty desert wells, and thence in vain
Strive to assuage their fierce and torturing pain.

The hopes of triumph now had quite departed,
But an austerer glory still remained,—
Still to abide 'mid failing hearts high-hearted ;
And though the light that lit their path had waned,
And by no hope of victory sustained,
Still to do well what still was to be done ;—
The Prince amid defeat this glory won.

But ever as they drew the shore more near,
And as each ship received its living freight,
The Moorish squadrons on their feeble rear
And their diminishing ranks with added weight,
With louder cries and more tumultuous hate,
Thronged, pressing on more fiercely and more fast :
He who had been the first, was now the last.

He fain the last would quit the hostile shore,
Who leaped the foremost on its fatal strand :
Around him throng the Moors, behind, before :
Of those true-hearted that beside him stand
Some fall in death—the noble Ferdinand,
(Skill, courage, and despair alike in vain,)
In the foe's hands a captive must remain.

—' Not in ignoble bondage, nor for long,
If Christian hearts can worth or valour prize,
O gallant Prince, shalt thou endure this wrong,
This unbeseeming yoke, which on thee lies ; '
With such well-sounding gentle courtesies
The Mauritanian king him greeted fair,
When of his prisoner's high estate aware.

' To-morrow a swift ship shall cleave the main,
Bearing this message to the Tagus' shore,
That freedom shall to thee be given again,
If Ceuta will thy brother hold no more,
But unto us its rightful lords restore ;
This for a brother will not be denied :
Meanwhile with me, my guest thou shalt abide.'

Frank recognition of his grace the Prince
Rendered again—yet did not, when he heard
Of that so near deliverance, joy evince,
Nor of that ransom answered he a word :
Only it seemed some thought within him stirred,
That some large thought was stirring in his breast,
Which he had well-nigh spoke and then represt.

But now there waned not many moons, before
By favouring breezes wafted o'er the sea
They came, the prompt embassadors that bore
Large powers to set the princely captive free ;
Whom at this cost did ransom willingly
His loving brother, and did only yearn
That he should hasten his desired return.

And all seemed finished now, when 'Hear me,' cried
The Prince—'hear *me*, although a captive thrall :
Ye know that if my brother childless died,
Mine would be then the throne of Portugal:
While this is so, no power has he at all
Aught of its state to alienate or lose,
Unless with my consent, which I refuse.

'Shall that fair city, on whose walls my sire
With his own hands first planted the five shields
Of Portugal—shall Ceuta, glorious hire
Of labours long on stormy battle-fields,
Which o'er this land such broad dominion wields,
Be in a moment bartered for one poor
And worthless life? who would such thought endure?

'Its golden crosses glittering in the air,
Shall they give place to crescents foul and pale?
And for glad bells that call to Christian prayer,
The muezzin's melancholy voice prevail,
Bidding to impious rites? and at the tail
Of horses shall our images divine
Be dragged?—to stables turned each sacred shrine?

'No—rather if just ransom thou for me,
Such as a faithful man can pay, refuse,
And for my partners in captivity,—
For I not any liberty will use,
In which they share not,—then I rather choose
Of this poor life whatever may remain,
Till death release, to spend in captive pain.'

More he had said, but him the Moorish king
Not suffered to proceed—'And dost thou ween
To find captivity that easy thing,
Which by my grace it hitherto has been?
While thou in me this grace hast only seen,
Without thine harm thou thinkest to despoil
Us of the just reward of all our toil.

'O fool, to think I have no power nor will
To make thy bondage bitter unto thee!
That I with gall and wormwood cannot fill
Brimming the cup of thy captivity!
Thou art my slave; a slave's lot thine shall be,
Labour and pains—and, harder to be borne,
Insult and ignominy, stripes and scorn.

'But when, sore laden with thy shameful task,
Of thy long bondage thou shalt weary be,
And when 'mid basest labours thou shalt ask
For pity, ask it of thyself—not me:
For thou dost in thine own hands hold the key
Of thine own prison: yield to me that place,
Else shalt thou vainly crave the poorest grace.

'And ye, that did your bootless message bring,
Go back and say what sight these lands afford—
A Christian prince, the brother of your king,
Tending the horses of his Moorish lord.
Come and redeem him with the spear and sword,
If ye are minded once again to try
The welcome of our Moslem chivalry.'

By this from off his shoulders rudest men
Had torn his decent robes, and garmented
In prison-dress of coarsest serge, and then
Him to his task dishonourable led,
He nought resisting—only this he said,
' If that herein there be dishonour, thine
Is the dishonour and the shame, not mine.'

And his companions each and all were borne
One way or other to some servile toil,
'Mid blows and curses and tumultuous scorn,—
Whom all were free to buffet and to spoil,
Until they wet that cruel Afric soil
With mingled blood and tears, and scarcely thought
They would with life to that day's end be brought :

So that when they were thrust in harshest wise
Into a noisome vault at that day's close,
That noisome vault appeared a paradise,
Because it gave some shelter from the blows,
The taunts and insults of their cruel foes—
Because its bars and iron-strengthened gate
Rose strong between them and that clamorous hate.

But when there lacked not of their number one,
The Prince so joyed, as though he found reward
For all the suffering he that day had known :
Yet when a light permitted to regard
Their garments rent, swoln hands, and faces marred,
He, strong before all weakness to restrain,
Not any longer might from tears refrain.

—'Dear friends, that I have dragged you down with me
Into this gulf of woe, this makes my smart ;
That of this suffering and captivity
I may not for myself claim every part :
Oh this it is that causes my weak heart
To die within me ;—tell me you forgive
Only this wrong, and I again shall live.'

Nothing they spake ; but of that faithful band
One after other rising from his place,
Drew near, and knelt, and kissed the Prince's hand,
As though that hand dispersed all gifts and grace :
He raised and wound them in a strict embrace
One after other—'Brothers of my heart,
Henceforth for good or ill we never part.'

—'Oh, wish us not then any more away,
Our dear dear lord ; nor grudge to us our share
In this high suffering'—so they all did say—
'What could we ask more goodly or more fair,
Than that when men hereafter shall declare
Thy noble patience, they should then as well
Of us thy servants and true comrades tell?'

But he to them—'We know not what shall be,
Nor whither these things tend; if that we bore
To-day of outrage and indignity
Be but the first and least, and far, far more,
Yea, mortal suffering be for us in store;
Or if, when God awhile our faith has proved,
All suffering shall from us be then removed.

'But He who knoweth that we hither came
Not in the lust of spoil, nor heat of pride,
Nor with the hope to win ourselves a name,
But the dear faith of Christ to spread more wide,
Can give us strength in patience to abide,
Till one way or another grief has end;
Then let us unto Him our cause commend.'

What of the night remained, when thus the smart
Of their new bleeding wounds had been allayed
With the sweet balm of loving words, in part
Was spent in prayer; they lowly kneeling made
Their supplications unto God for aid;
And then they did their weary eyelids close
In brief oblivion of all earthly woes.

In dreams they wandered by familiar places
In their own land, unto their childhood dear;
And some were locked in loving fond embraces,
And sweet the voices of their home and clear
Came to them;—pain was gone, and doubt and fear;
And all the dreary and the dread between
Was gone, like something which had never been.

What happy dreams, blest visions without number,
Were scattered by their rude tormentors' tone,
Snapping in twain the golden links of slumber !
Then each poor captive staggering rose, as one
From off whose heart there had been rolled a stone
A little moment—to return again
With added weight, a sense of hopeless pain.

And this their mournful life continued long
Without a change, unless when some new day
Brought with it some new insult or new wrong,
Sharp taunt or scorn, which they might not gainsay,
Nor seem to feel ; which if one did repay
With but an angry look, he then would find
That there was worse and keener still behind.

But oh ! what gladness was it when they met,
The long day's miserable task-work o'er,
In their dank vault, and shared the black bread set,
With water from dank pools drawn, them before :
Then made they of that coarse and scanty store
A glorious meal, for love makes all things sweet,
And it is always joy when brethren meet.

Yet oft the wantonness of fell despite
Would grudge them this poor respite of their woes ;
And then harsh voices in the middle night,
Just as their leaden eyelids 'gan to close,
And their tired limbs were sinking to repose,
Would bid them forth, and task them to renew
The past day's work, or merely to undo.

Yet amid all still kept his constant mind,
Not to be wearied out by toil or pain,
Or all which malice could of outrage find,
The Steadfast Prince ; on him were spent in vain
All shafts of malice—able to sustain
Not his own heart alone, but aye to speak
Strength to the fainting, courage to the weak.

But if they cursed their foes, or wished them dead,
With gentle words, but firm, he would put down
Such evil thoughts :—'Shall we be angerëd
With them that help us to a martyr's crown ?
Shall we not rather our tormentors own
As scourges with which God doth scourge our sin,
And far unhappier than are we therein ?

'Your curses cannot harm them, but can make
Of your own hearts a hell instead of heaven ;
The healing virtue from affliction take,
And mar all gracious ends for which 'twas given.
With mortal men ye gloriously have striven ;
A harder task remains you—to oppose
Revenge and scorn and hate, far deadlier foes.'

Yet once, what time the others sleeping lay,
To one, an aged and faithful servant true,
Who, though he 'scaped that last disastrous day,
Yet when his lord's captivity he knew,
To share his bondage and his sufferings flew,—
He once unto this faithful servant old
More of his inmost bosom did unfold :

'To these, my poor companions, seem I strong,
And at some times such am I, as a rock
That has upstood in middle ocean long,
And braved the winds' and waters' angriest shock,
Counting their fury but an idle mock :
Yet sometimes weaker than the weakest wave
That dies about its base, when storms forget to rave.

'I from my God such strength have sometimes won,
That all the dark dark future I am bold
To face ;—but oh ! far otherwise anon,
When my heart sinks and sinks to depths untold,
Till being seems no deeper depth to hold,
Unfathomed by the line of my despair ;
And with my spirit so it now doth fare.

O God, that I had fall'n with them who fell
In that disastrous conflict by Tangiers !
O happy you, my brethren, ending well !
O not to be lamented with such tears
As we, condemned to waste inglorious years
In this captivity, which shall extend,
Without release, unto life's utmost end !

'Yet is not here the answer to my prayer ?
For I remember when upon my nod
Men waited, and the world did speak me fair,
Then thinking on my Saviour and my God,
And on the thorny path of life He trod
With bleeding feet, deep shame would fill my heart,
That I should in his sufferings bear no part.

'And then in secret prayed I earnestly
That I might to some likeness with my Lord
Be brought—not courted, praised, and honoured be,
While He was scorned, and buffeted, and gored
With cruel wounds; I knew my prayer was heard,
Though on what side affliction would appear,
I strove in vain to guess;—now all is clear.'

PART II.

WHAT man shall say that he the deepest deep
Has reached, whereto misfortune may him bring?
That never from her fatal urn may leap
A lot inscribed with heavier suffering
Than that he knows? that now of everything
Which sweetens life his life is stripped so bare,
That worse with him henceforth it cannot fare?

Not he, who had been hurled with impulse rude
Down from the honourable high estate
Wherein observed and reverenced once he stood;
He yet must be misfortune's trustier mate—
Must lie exposed to keener shafts of fate:
He, knowing much of ill, must find that more,
Bitterer and sharper, is for him in store.

For now his foes, by malice partly moved,
Because they saw it solaced him to share
All griefs and labours which the others proved ;
And how that all, though oft they threatened were,
And punished for their deed, yet still would bear
To him all reverence and respect, and bring
Homage to him as to a crownëd king ;—

And partly, for they dreaded lest his frame,
Which had been ever tender, weak, and frail,
And evidently weaker now became
With each succeeding day, should wholly fail,
Nor longer to sustain itself avail ;—
Lest it should sink beneath its cruel toil,
And them of all their promised gain despoil ;—

They now denied him the sad liberty
To share whatever pains the others knew :
Shut in a narrow dungeon must he lie,
Shut from their fellowship and service true ;
There he his resolution high may rue,
If ever ruth on high and noble deeds,
Whatever consequence they bring, succeeds.

Oh dreary months ! months growing into years,
Which o'er their heads, bringing no respite, passed;
And they must mingle still their drink with tears,
While fell upon them thicker and more fast
The shafts of anguish ;—yet for him at last,
The noblest sufferer of this suffering band,
The hour of his deliverance was at hand.

For once, when they as usual passed before
His vault, and softly called him, no reply
Might they obtain ;—but listening at the door,
They only heard him breathing heavily,
And caught at intervals a long-drawn sigh ;
Till, more times called, he faintly did desire
Who called to know, and what they might require.

—'Oh ! fares it, dearest lord, so ill with thee,
That now thou dost no more our voices know,
Who once couldst tell us each from each, if we
Did but so much as near thy dungeon go,
Bound on our weary errands to and fro?'
—'Oh, pardon me, my friends,—my extreme pain
Hath robbed me of all sense and dulled my brain.

'But go and say in what an evil case
I find me now ;—perchance they will relent
So far that I may in this noisome place,
For my short time remaining, not be pent ;
Or at my prayer they will at least consent
That one of you may now continue nigh,
And watch beside me—for, dear friends, I die.'

To the king's presence straight they forced their way,
Regardless of what dangers they might meet :
Before him prone upon the earth they lay ;
They kissed the very ground beneath his feet,
Laying the dust with tears, and did entreat
In anguish that their lord might not be left
Unhelped to perish, of all aid bereft.

But little might they find of pity there ;
New insults and new taunts were all they won ;
These, with rude blows, their only answer were :
—'Back to your tasks, ye Christian dogs—begone—
Away ! from me compassion finds he none :
Let him upon himself compassion show ;
I swear, by heaven, he shall no other know !

'What, shall ye come in arms to waste our land,
God's people to extirpate shall ye come,
And then, when it fares ill with you, demand
Our pity?—no ; accept your righteous doom,
O fools ! that in your own land had not room
To dwell—that had not strength to conquer ours ;
Fools, whose desires so far outstrip your powers !

'Where are they now, that with the fire and sword
Our land to harry were so free of old ?
Can they no pity to your Prince afford ?
Where is your King, and where your captains bold ?
Or has it not in Portugal been told
What here is done, and what by him is borne
Of shame and outrage, and of extreme scorn ?'

It seemed that from those votaries of Mahound
All love, all mercy quite had fled away ;
Yet in one heart this much of grace they found,
That when their tasks were ended of the day,
He who the dungeon where the sufferer lay
Kept, unto them consented to afford
A brief communion with their dying lord.

Admitted there, from cries and loud lament,
Untimely now, they scarcely could refrain ;
Fain would they with their shrieks the vault have rent ;
They knelt beside him, kissed his hands, the chain
That on his wasted limbs did still remain ;
They cast themselves the dungeon-floor along,
And tore their beards, and did their faces wrong.

Sobs choked their utterance wholly, to behold
The lineaments so marred and so defaced,
Which they had loved and reverenced so of old.
He too was deeply moved, but sooner chased
The weakness from him, and with calm replaced :
Then from the strawen pallet where he lay
Himself a little raising, thus did say :—

'If I sometimes an earnest hope have fed,
That I might breathe again my native air,
And tread my native soil, this wish was bred
By the desire I cherished to prepare
For you such honourable shelter there,
As could none other do, who did not know
How truly you have served me in my woe.

'For had I sate a king upon my throne,
All wealth, all honour waiting on mine eye,
You never could have truer service shown
Than you *have* shown me in my misery—
Nor I from any found more loyalty,
Than that which I have found upon your parts,
O children dear, O true and faithful hearts.

'And now that I am hastening to my rest,
One only thought of trouble doth employ
My soul, that I am leaving you opprest
With this huge weight of woe ;—the perfect joy
My bosom feels, knows only this alloy,
That many, when my lips are sealed in death,
Will seek to draw you from your holy faith.

'But oh! whatever of worst ill betide,
Choose not this manner to evade your woe :
Be true to God ; on Him in faith abide,
And sure deliverance you at length shall know ;
It may be that some path his hand will show
To your dear earthly homes ; or He will shape
For you at length my way of glad escape.

'Be true to God ; forsake not Him, and you
In all your griefs forsake He never will ;
The true of heart have found Him ever true ;
And this I say, who having known much ill,
Do now affirm Him faithful to fulfil
All promises—and boldly say that He
In all my griefs hath not forsaken me.'

No more he spake ; but speechless sank, oppressed
With the fierce fever that within him burned ;
But oh! what anguish then the hearts possessed
Of that poor captive band, who weeping turned,
And their dear lord, as now departed, mourned,—
Forth filing from that vault a weeping train,
Who had beheld him now, and should not see again.

Now seemed they desolate ; for he, although
Helpless his dearest to defend with power
From the least insult of the meanest foe,
Had seemed to them a shelter and a tower
Of refuge in affliction's fiercest hour,
From his lone dungeon spreading broad above
Their heads the buckler of his faith and love.

And still the tears flowed faster from their eyes,
As each his fellow weeping did remind
Of all his loving gentle courtesies,
And gracious acts—how oft, as one that pined,
Even ere that sickness took him, he declined
His scanty portion of the food prepared,
Which among them with this pretext he shared.

—'He knew our fetters' clank, and with quick ear
One from another by that mournful sound
He could discern, nor ever passed we near
His dungeon, on our weary labour bound,
But he for us some words of comfort found,
And still he begged us pardon him, as though
Himself he owned the cause of all our woe.

'And what most grieved him, more than all he bore
In his own person of injurious wrong,
Piercing his very bosom's inmost core,
Was, if the tale was brought him that among
Us, his dear children, there had strife upsprung,
As sometimes did—for grief is quick and wild,—
Then left he not, till we were reconciled.'

—Beside the Prince might only one remain
In that unlighted vault the livelong night :
Its earlier watches seemed of restless pain,
Nothing he spake, but tossed from left to right,
Like one who vainly did some ease invite ;
Till when it verged toward morning, he that kept
That anxious vigil deemed the sufferer slept :

Or sometimes feared he was already dead,
So noiseless now that chamber's silence deep ;
Yet ventured not to speak or stir, for dread
Lest he should chase away that sweetest sleep
Of morning, which comes over them that keep
Pained watches through the night ;—till tardily
The grey dawn broke, and he drew gently nigh.

When lo ! with folded palms the martyr lay,
His eyes unclosed—and stood in each a tear,
And round his mouth a sweeter smile did play
Than ever might on mortal lips appear :
No mortal joy could ever have come near
The joy that bred that smile ; with waking eye
He seemed to mark some vision streaming by.

Then feared to rouse him from that blessëd trance,
And back again with noiseless step retired
That good old man—nor nearer would advance,
Though of his weal he gladly had inquired.
He waited, and a long long hour expired,
And it was silence still—when to his bed
Him beckoning soft, the princely sufferer said :

'What I shall speak, now promise that to none
Of all my fellow captives shall be told;
That not till this poor body shall have gone
The way of all the earth, thou wilt unfold
My words, yea, evermore in silence hold,
Unless hereafter should a time betide,
When by the telling God were glorified.

'Two hours or more before the spring of day,
As I within me mused how poor and leer
This world, and as in pain I waking lay,
Thought upon all the happy souls, that here
Once suffered, but are now exempt from fear
And pain and wrong, there woke within my breast
A speechless longing for that heavenly rest.

'Mine eyes were steadfastly towàrd the wall
Turned, when I saw a wondrous vision there;
I saw a vision bright, majestical,
One seated on a throne—and many fair
And dazzling shapes before Him gathered were,
With palms in hand; such glory from his face
Was shed, as lightened all this dismal place.

'This dismal vault, this dungeon of deep gloom,
This sunless dwelling of eternal night,
Which I have felt so long my living tomb,
Showed like the court of heaven—so clear, so bright,
So full of odours, harmonies and light:
And music filled the air—a heavenly strain,
That rose awhile, and then was hushed again.

'Then one came forward from that blessëd throng,
And kneeled to Him, and said—"Compassion take
On this thy servant, who has suffered long
Such great and heavy troubles for thy sake.
We thank Thee, Lord, that Thou so soon wilt make
Thy servant's many woes to end, that he
Into our choir admitted now will be."

'When thus I heard him speak, I marked him well,
And by his banner and his scales, I knew
It was the great Archangel Michaël:
And by his side there knelt another too,
Who in one hand a chalice held in view,
The other clasped a book, and there was writ,
"In the beginning was the Word," in it.

'But then my Lord, my Saviour, turned to me,
And with sweet smile ineffable He said,
"To-day thou comest hence, and shalt be free!"
With music, as it came, then vanishëd
The vision; but within me it has bred
Sweet comfort that remains, and now I know
To-day I leave the world, and end my woe.

'My Lord, my God, what wondrous grace is this,
That Thou hast not disdained to visit me,
And give me tidings of my coming bliss?
Who am I, sinful man, so graced to be?
Oh, gladly will I bear whate'er by Thee
May be appointed, ere my race be run,
Of pain or travail—Lord, thy will be done.'

In calmest quiet, waiting his release,
When he had finished thus his prayer, he lay :
'Lord, now Thou lettest me depart in peace,'
Were the last words which he was heard to say,
Upon his left side turning, as the day,
Slow sinking now with more than usual pride,
Streamed through the prison bars, a splendour deep and wide.

When the last flush had faded from the west,
When the last streak of golden light was gone,
They looked, but he had entered on his rest ;
He too his haven of repose had won ;—
Leaving this truth to be gainsaid by none,
That what the legend on his shield did say,
That well his life had proved—*Le bien me plaît.*

THE CROSS.

FROM CALDERON.

TREE, which Heaven has willed to dower
With that true fruit whence we live,
As that other, death did give ;
Of new Eden loveliest flower ;
Bow of light, that in worst hour
Of the worst flood signal true
O'er the world, of mercy threw ;
Fair plant, yielding sweetest wine ;
Of our David harp divine ;
Of our Moses tables new ;
Sinner am I, therefore I
Claim upon thy mercies make,
Since alone for sinners' sake
God on thee endured to die.

ORPHEUS AND THE SIRENS.

HIGH on the poop, with many a godlike peer,
With heroes and with kings, the flower of Greece,
That gathered at his word from far and near,
To snatch the guarded fleece,

Great Jason stood; nor ever from the soil
The anchor's brazen tooth unfastenëd,
Till, auspicating so his glorious toil,
From golden cup he shed

Libations to the Gods, to highest Jove,
To Waves and prospering Winds, to Night and Day,
To all by whom befriended they might prove
A favourable way.

With him the twins, one mortal, one divine,
Of Leda, and the Strength of Hercules;
And Tiphys, steersman through the perilous brine,
And many more with these:

Great father, Peleus, of a greater son,
And Atalanta, martial queen, was here;
And that supreme Athenian, nobler none,
And Idmon, holy seer:

Nor Orpheus pass unnamed, though from the rest
Apart, he leaned upon that lyre divine,
Which once in heaven his glory should attest,
Set there, a sacred sign:

But when auspicious thunders pealed on high,
Unto its chords and to his chant sublime
The joyful heroes, toiling manfully,
With measured strokes kept time.

Then when that keel divided first the waves,
Them Chiron cheered from Pelion's piny crown,
And wondering sea-nymphs rose from ocean caves,
And all the Gods looked down.

The bark divine, itself instinct with life,
Went forth, and baffled ocean's rudest shocks,
Eluding, though with pain and arduous strife,
Those huge encountering rocks ;

And force and fraud o'ercome, and peril past,
The hard-won trophy raised in open view,
Through prosperous floods was bringing home at last
Its high heroic crew ;

Till now they cried (Ææa left behind,
And the dead waters of the Cronian main),
'No peril more upon our path we find,
Safe haven soon we gain :'

When, as they spake, sweet sounds upon the breeze
Came to them, melodies till then unknown,
And, blended into one delight with these,
Sweet odours sweetly blown,—

Sweet odours wafted from the flowery isle,
Sweet music breathëd by the Sirens three,
Who there lie wait, all passers to beguile,
Fair monsters of the sea !

Fair monsters foul, that with their magic song
And beauty to the shipman wandering
Worse peril than disastrous whirlpools strong,
Or fierce sea-robbers bring.

Sometimes upon the diamond rocks they leant,
Sometimes they sate upon the flowery lea
That sloped towàrd the wave, and ever sent
Shrill music o'er the sea.

One piped, one sang, one swept the golden lyre ;
And thus to forge and fling a threefold chain
Of linkëd harmony the three conspire,
O'er land and hoary main.

The winds, suspended by the charmëd song,
Shed treacherous calm about that fatal isle ;
The waves, as though the halcyon o'er its young
Were always brooding, smile ;

And every one that listens, presently
Forgetteth home, and wife, and children dear,
All noble enterprise and purpose high,
And turns his pinnace here,—

He turns his pinnace, warning taking none
From the plain doom of all that went before,
Whose bones lie bleaching in the wind and sun,
And whiten all the shore.

He cannot heed,—so sweet unto him seems
To reap the harvest of the promised joy ;
The wave-worn man of such secure rest dreams,
So guiltless of annoy.

—The heroes and the kings, the wise, the strong,
That won the fleece with cunning and with might,
They too are taken in the net of song,
Snared in that false delight;

Till ever loathlier seemed all toil to be,
And that small space they yet must travel o'er,
Stretched, an immeasurable breadth of sea,
Their fainting hearts before.

'Let us turn hitherward our bark,' they cried,
'And, bathed in blisses of this happy isle,
Past toil forgetting and to come, abide
In joyfulness awhile;

'And then, refreshed, our tasks resume again,
If other tasks we yet are bound unto;
Combing the hoary tresses of the main
With sharp swift keel anew.'

O heroes, that had once a nobler aim,
O heroes sprung from many a godlike line,
What will ye do, unmindful of your fame,
And of your race divine?

But they, by these prevailing voices now
Lured, evermore drew nearer to the land,
Nor saw the wrecks of many a goodly prow,
That strewed that fatal strand;

Or seeing, feared not; warning taking none
From the plain doom of all that went before,
Whose bones lay bleaching in the wind and sun,
And whitened all the shore.

And some impel through foaming billows now
The hissing keel, and some tumultuous stand
Upon the deck, or crowd about the prow,
Waiting to leap to land.

And them this fatal lodestar of delight
Had drawn to ruin wholly, but for one
Of their own selves, who swept his lyre with might,
Calliope's great son.

He singing, (for mere words were now in vain,
That melody so led all souls at will),
Singing he played, and matched that earth-born strain
With music sweeter still.

Of holier joy he sang, more true delight,
In other happier isles for them reserved,
Who, faithful here, from constancy and right
And truth have never swerved ;

How evermore the tempered ocean gales
Breathe round those hidden islands of the blest,
Steeped in the glory spread, when daylight fails
Far in the sacred West ;

How unto them, beyond our mortal night,
Shines evermore in strength the golden day ;
And meadows with purpureal roses bright
Bloom round their feet alway ;

And plants of gold—some burn beneath the sea,
And some, for garlands apt, the land doth bear,
And lacks not many an incense-breathing tree,
Enriching all that air.

Nor need is more, with sullen strength of hand
To vex the stubborn earth, or cleave the main ;
They dwell apart, a calm heroic band,
Not tasting toil or pain.

Nor sang he only of unfading bowers,
Where they a tearless painless age fulfil,
In fields Elysian spending blissful hours,
Remote from every ill ;

But of pure gladness found in temperance high,
In duty owned, and reverenced with awe,
Of man's true freedom, which may only lie
In servitude to law ;

And how 'twas given through virtue to aspire
To golden seats in ever-calm abodes ;
Of mortal men, admitted to the quire
Of high immortal Gods.

He sang—a mighty melody divine,
Waking deep echoes in the heart of each—
Reminded whence they drew their royal line,
And to what heights might reach.

And all the while they listened, them the speed
Bore onward still of favouring wind and tide,
That when their ears were vacant to give heed
To any sound beside,

The feeble echoes of that other lay,
Which held awhile their senses thralled and bound,
Were in the distance fading quite away,
A dull unheeded sound.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE.

FROM THE FOURTH GEORGIC, 452—516.

Aristæus, all whose bees have perished by disease and hunger, inquires of Proteus the cause of this disaster and the remedy. Proteus replies:

NOT without wrath of heaven has thee this pest overtaken.
Great as thy plague was thy crime: his lost wife angrily mourning
Orpheus, meriting ill that grievous doom that befell him,
Stirs (if no fates avert), for thee these righteous revenges.
She, while she fled from thee in headlong haste and unwary,
Nigh to her death, that snake of folds enormous beheld not,
Coiled in the brake at her feet, and guarding the banks of the river.
But then the choir of her equals, the Dryads, with shrill lamentation
Filled the high mountain tops; nor wanted voices of weeping
All o'er that rugged land, by Mars beloved; and the rivers
Mourned, and with high Pangæum Athenian Orithyia.
He with his hollow shell his sick soul loving to solace,
Thee on the lonely sea-shore, his sweetest partner, sang ever,

Thee when the day was breaking, and thee when the day had departed.
Yea, and the jaws of hell, the high portals of Pluto's dominion,
And that forest that glooms with a night of darkness and terror
Ent'ring, he came to the ghosts, he came to the Monarch, the dreadful,
Came to the hearts that know not to melt at man's supplication.
But, disturbed by his song, from the lowest recesses of Hades
Flitted the shadows thin, weak forms of the dwellers in darkness ;
These than the birds not fewer, the thousands that hide in the branches,
Evening them from the mountains or storms of winter compelling ;
Matrons, and men of old, and bodies of glorious heroes,
Left by the breath of life, and boys, and maidens unmarried,
And on the funeral pile youths stretched in the sight of their parents ;
Whom the black slime all round, and the reed deform of Cocytus,
Whom with its sullen tide that marsh unlovely confined there
Keeps, and the river of hate with a ninefold girdle coerces.
Yea, and astonied then Death's halls and secret pavilions
Stood, and the Furies three, their locks with pale vipers enwoven ;
While with his triple jaws stood Cerberus yawning, and hurt not ;
And, by the storm undriven, stayed moveless the wheel of Ixion.

And now, retracing his path, he had every danger surmounted,
And his beloved and restored to the upper air was approaching,
Pacing behind—for such was the law Proserpina gave them—
When, too heedless a lover, him madness seized of a sudden,
Such as might well find grace, if grace dwelt ever in Hades.
His Eurydice he on the verge and confines of daylight,
Too, too fond and forgetful ! must pause and look back on ; with that look
Wasted was all his toil, and the laws of the tyrant remorseless
Broken ; the Stygian pools three times with a shrieking resounded.
'Orpheus,' she cried, 'who thee and me has ruined, the wretched ?
Whence this madness immense? lo ! the cruel destinies call me
Back, and my swimming eyes with a weight of slumber are sealing.
And now adieu ; I am borne by a night of darkness surrounded,
Stretching to thee,—ah, thine no longer,—the hands that are helpless.'
Thus exclaimed she, and straight, like smoke that mingles in thin air,
Out of his sight she vanished, another way fleeing ; nor ever
Him idly grasping at shadows, and many things yearning to utter,
Saw she again at all ; nor him hell's ferryman henceforth
Suffered to pass that lake which each from the other divided.

What should he do, or whither, of wife twice widowed, betake him?
Move with what voice, what weeping, the powers of hell or of heaven?
Cold in the Stygian bark she already was crossing the river:
Him they report for seven whole months in order unbroken,
Under a lofty rock, by Strymon's desolate waters,
This among icy caves to have wept and weeping recounted;
Soothing the tigers with song, and with song compelling the forest;
As when, mourning beneath some poplar shade, Philomela
Wails for her ravished young, whom the cruel ploughman observing
Has from the nest withdrawn, an unfledged brood; but the mother
Grieves on a bough all night, her pitiful descant repeating,
Descant forlorn, that fills wide spaces with sad lamentation.

QUATRAINS.

THE PHŒNIX.

WHEN Adam ate of that forbidden food,
Sole bird that shared not in his sin was I:
And so my life is evermore renewed,
And I among the dying never die.

THE PELICAN.

I am the bird that from my bleeding breast
Draw the dear stream which nourishes my brood;
And feebly unto men his love attest,
True pelican, that feeds them with his blood.

THE HALCYON.

For twice seven days, in winter's middle rage,
The winds are hushed, the billows are at rest ;
Heaven all for me their fury doth assuage,
While I am brooding o'er my fluctuant nest.

THE COCK.

What time an ass with horrid bray you hear,
Believe he sees a wicked sprite at hand ;
But when I make my carol loud and clear,
Know that an angel doth before me stand.

THE SAME.

I, clapping on my sides my wings with might,
First to myself the busy morn proclaim :
Who others will to tasks and toil incite,
Should first himself have summoned to the same.

THE PEACOCK.

I, glorying in my tail's extended pride,
See my foul legs, and then I shriek outright ;
So shrieks a human soul, which has descried
Its baseness 'mid vainglorious self-delight.

THE EAGLE.

I no degenerate progeny will raise,
But try my callow offspring, which will look
In the sun's eye with peremptory gaze ;
Nor feebler nurslings in my nest will brook.

THE ERMINE.

To miry places me the hunters drive,
Where I my robe of purest white must stain ;
Then yield I, nor for life will longer strive ;
For spotless death, not spotted life, is gain.

THE MANDRAKE.

I from the earth with bleeding roots am wrung,
With shriekings heard far off and keen lament :
So thou and all who to the world have clung
Shall from the world with piercing cries be rent.

THE BEES.

We light on fruits and flowers and purest things;
For if on carcasses or aught unclean,
When homeward we returned, with mortal stings
Would slay us the keen watchers round our queen.

THE DIAMOND.

I only polished am in mine own dust ;
Nought else against my hardness will prevail :
And thou, O man, in thine own sufferings must
Be polished : every meaner art will fail.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

Leaning my bosom on a pointed thorn,
I bleed, and bleeding sing my sweetest strain ;
For sweetest songs of saddest hearts are born,
And who may here dissever love and pain ?

THE SNAKE.

Myself I force some narrowest passage through,
Leaving my old and wrinkled skin behind,
And issuing forth in splendour of my new :
Hard entrance into life all creatures find.

THE TIGER.

Hearing sweet music, as in fell despite,
Enraged, myself I do in pieces tear :
The melody of other men's delight
There are of you who can as little bear.

FALLING STARS.

Angels are we, who once from heaven exiled,
Would scale its crystal battlements again ;
But have their keen-eyed watchers not beguiled,
Thrust by their glittering lances back amain.

THE YOUNG CHILDREN.

Fair sight are we, white doves, which refuge sure
Are finding in a tall rock's rifted side ;
Types of a fairer thing, of children pure,
Which early did their lives with Jesu hide.

MORNING.

Day conquers : night, that was day's foe, is dead,
And right across the morning's threshold lies :
Day's golden sword its crimson blood hath shed,
Which overfloweth all the eastern skies.

THE FOUR EVANGELISTS.

As those four streams that had in Eden birth,
And did the whole world water, four ways going,
With spiritual freshness fill our thirsty earth
Four fountains from one sacred mountain flowing.

ST. STEPHEN (Στέφανος).

Of all which thou shouldst be thy glorious name
Was prophecy and omen long before,
Who, being Stephen, from the first didst claim
The crown at length thy conquering temples wore.

OH thou of dark forebodings drear,
Oh thou of such a faithless heart,
Hast thou forgotten what thou art,
That thou hast ventured so to fear?

No weed on ocean's bosom cast,
Borne by its never-resting foam
This way and that, without a home,
Till flung on some bleak shore at last:

But thou the lotus, which above
Swayed here and there by wind and tide,
Yet still below doth fixed abide,
Fast rooted in the eternal Love.

THE OIL OF MERCY.

MANY beauteous spots the earth
Still may keep; but brighter, fairer,
Did that long-lost Eden show
Than the loveliest that remaineth:
So what marvel, when our Sire
Was from thence expelled, he waited
Lingering with a fond regret
Round those holy happy places
Once his own, while innocence
Was his bright sufficient raiment?

Long he lingered there, and saw
Up from dark abysmal spaces
Four strong rivers rushing ever :
Saw the mighty wall exalted
High as heaven, and on its heights
Glimpses of the fiery Angel.
Long he lingered near, with hope
Which had never quite abated,
That one day the righteous sentence,
Dooming him to stern disgraces,
Should be disannulled, and he
In his first bliss reinstated.

But when mortal pangs surprised him,
By an unseen foe assailëd,
Seth he called, his dearest son,
Called him to his side, and faintly
Him addressed—'My son, thou knowest
Of what sufferings partaker,
Of what weariness and toil,
Of what sickness, pain and danger
I have been, since that stern hour
Which from Eden's precincts drave me.
But thou dost not know that God,
When to exile forth I farëd,
Homeless wanderer through the world,
Thus with gracious speech bespake me :
—"Though thou mayst not here continue,
In these blessëd happy places,
As before from pain exempt,
Suffering, toil, and mortal ailment,
Think not thou shalt therefore be
Of my loving care forsaken :
Rather shall that Tree of Life,
In the middle garden planted,
Once a precious balm distil,

Which to thee applied, thine ailments
Shall be all removed, and thou
Made of endless life partaker."—
With these words He cheered me then,
Words that have remained engraven
On my bosom's tablets since.
Go then, dear my son, oh hasten
Unto Eden's guarded gate,
Tell thine errand to the Angel;
And that fiery sentinel
To the Tree will guide thee safely,
Where it stands, aloft, alone,
In the garden's middle spaces:
Thence bring back that oil of mercy,
Ere my lamp of life be wasted.'

When his father's feeble words
Seth had heard, at once he hastened,
Hoping to bring back that oil,
Ere the light had wholly faded
From his father's eyes, the lamp
Of his life had wholly wasted.
O'er the plain besprent with flowers,
With ten thousand colours painted
In that spring time of the year,
By Thelassar on he hastened,
Made no pause, till Eden's wall
Rose an ever-verdant barrier,
High as heaven's great roof, that shines
As with bright carbuncles paven.
There the son of Adam paused,
For above him hung the Angel
In the middle air suspense,
With his swift sword glancing naked.
Down upon his face he fell,
By that sun-bright vision dazëd.

'Child of man'—these words he heard,
'Rise, and say what thing thou cravest.'
All his father's need he told,
And how now his father waited,
In his mighty agony
For that medicine yearning greatly.
'But thou seekest'—(this reply
Then he heard) 'thou seekest vainly
For that oil of mercy yet,
Nor will tears nor prayers avail thee.
Go then quickly back, and bring
These my words to him, thy parent,
Parent of the race of men.
He and they in faith and patience
Must abide, long years must roll
Ere the precious fruit be gathered,
Ere the Oil of Mercy flow
From the blessëd Tree and sacred,
In the Paradise of God:
Nor till then will be obtainëd
The strong medicine of life,
Healing every mortal ailment;
Nor thy sire till then be made
Of immortal life a sharer.
Fear not that his heart will sink
When these tidings back thou bearest,
Rather thou shalt straightway see
All his fears and pangs abated,
And by faith allayed to meekness
Every wish and thought impatient;
Hasten back then—thy return,
Strongly yearning, he awaiteth:
Hasten back then.'
On the word
To his father back he hastened,
Found him waiting his return

In his agony, his latest :
Told him of what grace to come,
Of what sure hope he was bearer :
And beheld him on that word,
Every fear and pang assuagëd,
And by faith allayed to meekness
Every wish and thought impatient,
Like a child resign himself
Unto sweet sleep, calm and painless.

THE TREE OF LIFE.

FROM AN OLD LATIN POEM.

THERE is a spot, of men believed to be
Earth's centre, and the place of Adam's grave,
And here a slip that from a barren tree
Was cut, fruit sweet and salutary gave—
Yet not unto the tillers of the land ;
That blessëd fruit was culled by other hand.

The shape and fashion of the tree attend ;
From undivided stem at first it sprung ;
Thence in two arms its branches did outsend,
Like sail-yards whence the flowing sheet is hung,
Or as a yoke that in the furrow stands,
When the tired steers are loosened from their bands.

Three days the slip from which this tree should spring
Appeared as dead—then suddenly it bore,
(While earth and heaven stood awed and wondering)
Harvest of vital fruit ;—the fortieth more
Beheld it touch heaven's summit with its height,
And shroud its sacred head in clouds of light.

Yet the same while it did put forth below
Branches twice six, these too with fruit endued,
Which stretching to all quarters might bestow
Upon all nations medicine and food,
Which mortal men might eat, and eating be
Sharers henceforth of immortality.

So fared it ; but when fifty days were gone,
A breath divine, a mighty storm of heaven
On all the branches swiftly lighted down,
To which a rich nectareous taste was given,
And all the heavy leaves that on them grew
Distilled henceforth a sweet and heavenly dew.

Beneath that tree's great shadow on the plain
A fountain bubbled up, whose lymph serene
Nothing of earthly mixture might distain :
Fountain so pure not anywhere was seen
In all the world, nor on whose marge the earth
Put flowers of such unfading beauty forth.

And thither did all people, young and old,
Matrons and virgins, rich and poor, a crowd
Stream ever, who, whenas they did behold
Those branches with their golden burden bowed,
Stretched forth their hands, and eager glances threw
Towàrd the fruit distilling that sweet dew.

Yet touch they might not these, much less allay
Their hunger, howsoe'er they might desire,
Till the foul tokens of their former way
They had washed off, the dust and sordid mire,
And cleansed their bodies in that holy wave,
Able from every spot and stain to save.

But when within their mouths they had received
Of that immortal fruit the gust divine,
Straight of all sickness were their souls relieved,
The weak grew strong ;—and tasks they *did* decline
As overgreat for them, they shunned no more,
And things they deemed they could not bear, they bore.

But woe, alas ! some daring to draw near
That sacred stream, did presently retire,
Drew wholly back again, and did not fear
To stain themselves in all their former mire,
That fruit rejecting from their mouths again,
Not any more their medicine, but their bane.

Oh happy they, who not withdrawing so,
First in that fountain make them pure and fair,
And who from thence unto the branches go,
With power upon the fruitage hanging there :
Thence by the branches of the lofty tree
Ascend to heaven —The Tree of Life oh, see !

THE TREE OF LIFE.

FROM THE GERMAN OF RÜCKERT.

WHEN Adam's latest breath was nearly gone,
To Paradise the Patriarch sent his son ;

A branch to fetch him from the Tree of Life,
Hoping to taste of it ere life was done.

Seth brought the branch, but ere he had arrived,
His father's spirit was already flown.

Then planted they the twig on Adam's grave,
And it was tended still from son to son.

It grew while Joseph in the dungeon lay,
It grew while Israel did in Egypt groan.

Sweet odours gave the blossoms of the tree,
When David harping sat upon his throne.

Dry was the tree, when from the ways of God
Went erring in his wisdom Solomon :

Yet the world hoped it would revive anew,
When David's stock should give another Son.

Faith saw in spirit this, the while she sat
Mourning beside the floods of Babylon.

And when the eternal lightning flashed from heaven,
The tree asunder burst with jubilant tone.

To the dry trunk this grace from God was given,
The wood of Passion should from thence be won.

The blind world fashioned out of it the Cross,
And its Salvation nailed with scorn thereon.

Then bore the Tree of Life ensanguined fruit,
Which whoso tasteth, life shall be his loan.

Oh look, oh look, how grows the Tree of Life ;
By storms established more, not overthrown.

May the *whole* world beneath its shadow rest !
Half has its shelter there already won.

PARADISE.

FROM THE GERMAN OF RÜCKERT.

OH ! Paradise must show more fair
Than any earthly ground ;
And therefore longs my spirit there
Right quickly to be found.

In Paradise a stream must flow
Of everlasting love :
Each tear of longing shed below
Therein a pearl will prove.

In Paradise a breath of balm
All anguish must allay,
Till every anguish growing calm,
Even mine shall flee away.

And there the tree of stillest peace
In verdant spaces grows :
Beneath it can one never cease
To dream of blest repose.

A cherub at the gate must be,
Far off the world to fray,
That its rude noises reach not me,
To fright my dream away.

My heart, that weary ship, at last
Safe haven there will gain,
And on the breast will slumber fast
The wakeful infant, Pain.

For every thorn that pierced me here
The rose will there be found ;
With joy, earth's roses brought not near,
My head will there be crowned.

There all delights will blossom forth,
That here in bud expire,
And from all mourning weeds of earth
Be wove a bright attire.

All here I sought with vain pursuit,
Will freely meet me there,
As from green branches golden fruit,
Fair flowers from gardens fair.

My youth, that by me swept amain,
On swift wing borne away,
And Love, that suffered me to drain
His nectar for a day,—

These, never wishing to depart,
Will me for ever bless,
Their darling fold unto the heart,
And comfort and caress.

And there the Loveliness, whose glance
From far did on me gleam,
But whose unveilëd countenance
Was only seen in dream,

Will, meeting all my soul's desires,
Unveil itself to me,
When to the choir of starry lyres
Shall mine united be.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

FROM THE SPANISH OF CALDERON.

HONEY in the lion's mouth,
Emblem mystical, divine,
How the sweet and strong combine ;
Cloven rock for Israel's drouth ;
Treasure-house of golden grain,
By our Joseph laid in store,
In his brethren's famine sore
Freely to dispense again ;
Dew on Gideon's snowy fleece ;
Well from bitter changed to sweet ;
Shew-bread laid in order meet,
Bread whose cost doth not increase
Though no rain in April fall ;
Horeb's manna, freely given,
Showered in white dew from heaven,
Marvellous, angelical ;
Weightiest bunch of Canaan's vine ;
Cake to strengthen and sustain
Through long days of desert pain ;
Salem's monarch's bread and wine ;—
Thou the antidote shalt be
Of my sickness and my sin,
Consolation, medicine,
Life and Sacrament to me.

THE PRODIGAL.

WHY feedest thou on husks so coarse and rude?
I could not be content with angels' food.

How camest thou companion to the swine?
I loathed the courts of heaven, the choir divine.

Who bade thee crouch in hovel dark and drear?
I left a palace wide to hide me here.

Harsh tyrant's slave who made thee, once so free?
A father's rule too heavy seemed to me.

What sordid rags float round thee on the breeze
I laid immortal robes aside for these.

An exile through the world who bade thee roam?
None, but I wearied of a happy home.

Why must thou dweller in a desert be?
A garden seemed not fair enough to me.

Why sue a beggar at the mean world's door?
To live on God's large bounty seemed so poor.

What has thy forehead so to earthward brought?
To lift it higher than the stars I thought.

LINES WRITTEN ON THE FIRST TIDINGS OF THE CABUL MASSACRES.

JANUARY, 1842.

WE sat our peaceful hearths beside,
Within our temples hushed and wide
We worshipped without fear :
With solemn rite, with festal blaze,
We welcomed in the earliest days
Of this new-coming year.

O ye that died, brave hearts and true,
How in those days it fared with you
We did not then surmise ;
That bloody rout which still must seem
The fancy of a horrid dream,
Was hidden from our eyes :

But haunts us now by day and night
The vision of that ghastly flight,
Its shapes of haggard fear :
While still from many a mourning home
The wails of lamentation come,
And fill our saddened ear.

O England, bleeding at thy heart
For thy lost sons, a solemn part
Doth Heaven to thee assign.
High wisdom hast thou need to ask,
For vengeance is a fearful task,
And yet that task is thine.

Oh then fulfil it, not in pride,
Nor aught to passionate hate allied ;
  But know thyself to be
The justicer of righteous Heaven ;
That unto thee a work is given,
  A burden laid on thee.

So thine own heart from guilty stains
First cleanse, and then, for what remains,
  That do with all thy might ;
That with no faltering hand fulfil,
With no misgiving heart or will,
  As dubious of the right :

That do, not answering wrong for wrong,
But witnessing that truth is strong,
  And, outraged, bringeth woe.
'Tis this by lessons sad and stern,
To men who no way else would learn,
  Which thou art set to show.

MOOLTAN.

BEAR them gently, bear them duly, up the broad and sloping breach
Of this torn and shattered city, till their resting-place they reach.

In the costly cashmeres folded, on the stronghold's topmost crown,
In the place of foremost honour, lay these noble relics down.

Here repose, for this is meetest, ye who here breathed out your life,
Ah! in no triumphant battle, but beneath the assassin's knife.

Hither bearing England's message, bringing England's just command,
Under England's ægis came ye to the chieftain of the land:

In these streets beset and wounded, hardly borne with life away,
Faint, and bleeding, and forsaken, in your helplessness ye lay.

But the wolves that once have tasted blood, will ravin still for more;
From the infuriate city rises high the wild and savage roar.

Near and nearer grows the tumult of the gathering murderous crew;
Tremble round those helpless couches an unarmed but faithful few:

'Profitless is all resistance: let us then this white flag wave;
Ere it be too late, disdain not mercy at their hands to crave.'

But to no unworthy pleading would descend that noble twain:
'Nay, for mercy sue not; ask not what to ask from these were vain.

'We are two, betrayed and lonely; human help or hope is none;
Yet, O friends, be sure that England owns beside us many a son.

'They may slay us; in our places multitudes will here be found,
Strong to hurl this guilty city with its murderers to the ground;

'Yea, who stone by stone would tear it from its deep foundations strong,
Rather than to leave unpunished them that wrought this bloody wrong.'

Other words they changed between them, which none else could understand,
Accents of our native English, brothers grasping hand in hand.

So they died, the gallant-hearted! so from earth their spirits past,
Uttering words of lofty comfort each to each unto the last;

And we heed, but little heeded their true spirits far away,
All of wrong and coward outrage, heaped on the unfeeling clay.

—Lo ! a few short moons have vanished, and the promised ones appear,
England's pledged and promised thousands, England's multitudes are here.

Flame around the blood-stained ramparts loud-voiced messengers of death,
Girdling with a fiery girdle, blasting with a fiery breath ;

Ceasing not, till choked with corpses low is laid the murderers' hold,
And in his last lair the tiger toils of righteous wrath enfold.

Well, oh well—ye have not failed them who on England's truth relied,
Who on England's name and honour did in that dread hour confide :

Now one last dear duty render to the faithful and the brave,
What of earth they left behind them rescuing for a worthier grave.

Oh then, bear them, hosts of England, up the broad and sloping breach
Of this torn and shattered city, till their resting-place they reach.

In the costly cashmeres folded, on the rampart's topmost crown,
In the place of foremost honour lay these noble relics down.

THE LOREY-LEY.

FROM THE GERMAN OF HEINE.

WHAT makes me so heavy-hearted,
I ask of my heart in vain :
But a tale of the times departed
Haunts ever my heart and brain.

In the cool air it waxes dimmer,
And quietly flows the Rhine :
And the mountain summits glimmer
In the sunny evening shine.

There sits on the rocks a maiden,
In marvellous beauty there ;
With gold her apparel is laden,
And she combs her golden hair :

And the comb is of gold and glistens,
And thereto she sings a song,
Which for every soul that listens
Has a potent spell and strong.

The boatman in light boat speeding,
When he hears it utters a cry,
No longer the rapids heeding,
But only gazing on high.

The stream is its wild waves flinging
O'er boat and boatman anon,
And 'tis this with her fairy singing
That the Lorey-ley has done.

HYMN TO OCEAN.

FROM THE GERMAN OF RÜCKERT.

O CRADLE, whence the suns ascend, old Ocean divine ;
O grave, whereto the suns descend, old Ocean divine :

O spreading in the calm of night thy mirror, wherein
The moon her countenance doth bend, old Ocean divine.

O thou that dost in midnights still thy chorus of waves
With dances of the planets blend, old Ocean divine :

The morning and the evening blooms are roses of thine,
Two roses that for thine are kenned, old Ocean divine.

O Amphitrite's panting breast, whose breathing doth make
The waves to fall and to ascend, old Ocean divine :

O womb of Aphrodite, bear thy beautiful child,
Abroad thy glory to commend, old Ocean divine.

Oh sprinkle thou with pearly dew earth's garland of spring,
For only thou hast pearls to spend, old Ocean divine.

All Naiads that from thee had sprung, commanded by thee,
Back to thy Nereid-dances tend, old Ocean divine.

What ships of thought sail forth on thee! Atlantis doth
sleep
In silence at thine utmost end, old Ocean divine.

The goblets of the gods, from high Olympus that fall,
Thou dost on coral boughs suspend, old Ocean divine.

A diver in the sea of love my song is, that fain
Thy glory would to all commend, old Ocean divine

I like the moon beneath thy waves with yearning would
plunge;
Thence might I like the sun ascend, old Ocean divine.

SUNSET.

FROM THE GERMAN OF GOETHE.

FAUST is watching the setting sun, and after some mournful reflections exclaims:

YET the rich blessing which this hour bestows
Let us not mar with mournful thoughts like these:
See yonder where the sun of evening glows,
How gleam the green-girt cottages.
He stoops, he sinks—and overlived is day:
But he hastes on, to kindle life anew.
Ah! that no wing lifts me from earth away
Him to pursue, and evermore pursue:
Then should I in eternal evening-light
The hushed world at my feet behold,
See every vale in calm, and flaming every height,
And silver brooks see lost in floods of gold.

Then would not the wild mountain hinder more
My course divine with all its rugged heads :
Its heated bays even now the ocean spreads
My wondering eyes before.
Yet the god seems at last away to sink ;
But the new impulse stirs with might :
I hasten his eternal beams to drink,
The day before me, and behind the night,
The heaven above me spread, and under me the sea :
Fair dream ! which while I dwell on, he is gone.
Ah ! that an actual wing may not so soon
Unto our spirit's wing united be,
And yet it is to each inbred.
That still his spirit forward, upward springs,
When hidden in blue spaces overhead
The lark his shattering carol sings ;
When over pine-clad mountains soars
The eagle, spread upon the air,
When over seas and over moors
The crane doth to its home repair.

CONFIDENCES.

STERNLY tolls the castle bell,
A departing sinner's knell.

'Husband, truth must now be spoken,
I to thee my faith have broken.'

'Truth with truth repaid must be—
Wife, and I have poisoned thee.'

ON A BROTHER AND SISTER WHO DIED AT THE SAME TIME, ABERGELE, AUGUST 20, 1868.

MEN said, who saw the tender love they bare
Each to the other, and their hearts so bound
And knit in one, that neither sought or found
A nearer tie than that affection rare—
How with the sad survivor will it fare,
When death shall for a season have undone
The links of that close love ; and taking one,
The other leaves to draw unwelcome air?
And some perchance who loved them, would revolve
Sadly the sadness which on one must fall,
The lonely left by that dividing day.
Vain fears ! for He who loved them best of all,
Mightier than we life's mysteries to solve,
In one fire-chariot bore them both away.

ON THE REVIEW OF THE VOLUNTEERS IN HYDE-PARK BY THE QUEEN, 1860.

NO pause, no stay—a glorious hour or more,
And that loud-clashing music is not dumb,
For still the close battalions come and come,
As though all England the long pent-up store
Of her deliberate valour would outpour,
Not flaunting in war's liveries rich and gay,
But all in sober green and working gray,
O Lady of the land, thy feet before.
High beats thine heart, the Lady of a land
That breeds such men ; and theirs beat proud and high,
Who only with step statelier and more grand
Would move beneath thy recompensing eye,
Girt, if that day should call them, to reply
On some dread field to duty's last demand.

THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION, MAY 1, 1862.

SWEET, and yet sad, those thousand voices rung,
Winding and travelling through the long defiles
Of courts and galleries and far-reaching aisles;
And bright the banners from proud arches sprung;
But not the less their drooping folds among
Lurked a dim hoard of grief; while over all,
Chastening, not marring, our high festival,
The shadow of an absent Greatness hung;
Absent, and yet in absence present more,
For all we owe to him, and might have owed,
For the rich gifts which, missing, we deplore,
Than if he were rejoicing at this hour,
We with him, that the seed his wisdom sowed
Had blossomed in this bright consummate flower.

FROM THE GERMAN OF RÜCKERT.

MAN, the pomp and pride of earth
Were not merely spread for thee;
Nature bade some part have birth
For her own delight and glee.

Therefore sings the nightingale,
While thou sleepest, in the night;
Flowers, the fairest ones, unveil
Half their beauty ere daylight.

Soars the loveliest butterfly
All untracked by eye of thine;
Pearls in ocean's bosom lie,
Jewels in the unwrought mine.

Richly, child, are sky and plain
Furnished for thee; be content
That thy mother too retain
For herself some ornament.

THE CURSE OF CORN-HOARDERS.

OH, time it was of famine sore,
That ever sorer grew;
And many hungered, who before
Rich plenty only knew.

For year by year the labouring hind
Bewailed his fruitless toil,
And ever seemed some spell to bind
The hard, unthankful soil.

His seed-corn rotted in the ground,
And did not more appear;
Or if in blade and stalk was found,
It withered in the ear.

And now unseasonable rains,
And now untimely drought,
Or blight and mildew, all his pains
And hopes to nothing brought.

And ever did that keen distress
In wider circles spread;
Who once with alms did others bless,
Now lacked their daily bread.

One only, who was never known
To bless another's board—
In all that Suabian landalone
This cruel, impious lord,

Did all the while exempt appear
From this wide-reaching ill ;
With largest bounties of the year
His broad fields laughing still.

The autumn duly had outpoured
For him its plenteous horn,
And safe in ample granaries stored
He saw his golden corn ;

And high he reared new granaries vast,
Of hewn stone builded strong,
And made with bars of iron fast,
And fenced from every wrong.

Till safe, as seemed, from every foe,
He now, as if the sight
Of others' want and others' woe
Enhanced his own delight,

Sate high, and with his minions still
Did keep continual feast ;
Long nights with waste and wassail fill,
Which not with morning ceased ;

Till oft-times they who wandered near
Those halls at early day,
Culling wild herbs and roots in fear,
Their hunger to allay,

Heard sounds of fierce and reckless mirth
Borne from those halls of pride,
While famine's feeble wail went forth
From all the land beside ;

And strange thoughts rose in many a breast,
  Why God's true servants pined,
And largest means this man unblest
  Did still for riot find;

Which stranger grew, as more and more
  He did his coffers fill
With gold and every precious store,
  Wrung from men's cruel ill;

As he each poor man's field was fain
  To add unto his own—
To the wide space of his domain,
  Now daily wider grown.

For some, their lives awhile to save,
  Had sold him house and lands;
And some to bonds their children gave,
  As grew his stern demands:

Yet not a whit for poor man's curse
  This evil churl did care;
He said,—it passed, nor left him worse—
  That words were only air.

He, if they cried 'For Jesu's sake,
  That so may light on thee
God's blessing,' answer proud would make,
  'What will that profit me?

'I ask no blessing, yet my fields
  Have store of precious grain:
The earth to me its fatness yields
  The sky its sun and rain.

'And high my granaries stand, and strong,
Huge-vaulted, ribbed with stone :
What need I fear ? from any wrong
I can defend mine own.'—

Thus ever fierce and fiercer rose
His words of scorn and pride ;
And more he mocked at mortal woes,
And earth and heaven defied.

And thus it chanced upon a day,
As oft had been before,
That from his gates he spurned away
A widow, old and poor ;

When to his presence entered in
A servant, pale with fear,
And did with trembling words begin :—
'O dread my lord, give ear !

'As me perchance my business drew
Thy storehouse vast beside,
I heard unwonted sounds, and through
The iron grating spied.

'The thing I saw, if like it seemed
To any thing on earth,
I might some huge black bull have deemed
That hellish monstrous birth.

'Yet how should beast have entrance found
Into that guarded place,
Which strangely now it wandered round,
With wild unresting pace ?

Oh, here must be some warning meant,
Which do not now deride :
Oh, yet have pity, and relent,
Nor speak such words of pride.'

Slight heed his tale of fear might find,
Slight heed his counsel true ;
That utterance of his faithful mind
He now had learned to rue,

But that, even then, another came,
Worse terror in his mien :
—'Three monstrous creatures, breathing flame,
These eyes but now have seen ;

'They toss about thy hoarded store,
And greedily they eat,
Consuming thus a part, but more
They stamp beneath their feet.

'Oh, Sir, full often God doth take
What we refuse to give ;
But yet to Him large offering make,
And all our souls may live.'

—'Fool !—let another hasten now,
But if he shall not see
The self-same vision, fellow, thou
Shalt hang on yonder tree.'

He said—when, lo ! in rushed a third
Within the briefest space :—
—'Of horses wild and bulls a herd
Is filling all the place.

'The numbers of that furious rout
Wax ever high and higher ;
And from their mouths smoke issues out,
And from their nostrils fire.

'From side to side they leap and bound,
The hoarded corn they eat,
They toss and scatter on the ground,
And stamp beneath their feet.

'My lord, these portents do not scorn ;
Thy granary doors throw wide,
And poor men's prayers even yet may turn
The threatened wrath aside.'

—'What, all conspiring in one tale !
Or fooled by one deceit !
Yet think not ye shall so prevail,
Or me so lightly cheat.

'Come with me ;—fling the portals back ;
I too this sight would see :
What ! one and all this courage lack?
Give *me* the ponderous key.'

In fear the vassal multitude
Fell back on either side :
Before the doors he singly stood,
He singly—in his pride.

But them, or ere he touched, asunder
Some hand unbidden threw ;
With lightning flash, with sound like thunder
The gates wide open flew.

How shook then underneath the tread
Of thousand hoofs the earth !
Day darkened into night with dread,
So weird a troop rushed forth !

And all who saw like dead men stood,
As swept that wild troop by,
Till lost within a neighbouring wood
For aye from mortal eye.

But when that hurricane was past
Of hideous sight and sound,
And when they breathed anew, they cast
Their fearful glances round :

They lifted up a blackened corse,
Where scorched and crushed it lay,
And scarred with hoofs of fiery force,—
Then bore in awe away ;

They bore away, but not to hide
In any holy ground ;
Who in his height of sin had died
No hallowed burial found.

THE CORREGAN.

A BALLAD OF BRITTANY.

THEY were affianced, a youthful pair ;
In youth, alas ! they divided were.

Lovely twins she has brought to light,
A boy and a girl, both snowy white.

—'What shall now for thee be done,
Who hast brought me this longed-for son ?

Shall I fetch thee fowl from the sedgy mere ?
Or strike in the greenwood the flying deer ?'

—'Wild deer's flesh would please me best,
Yet wherefore go to the far forèst ?'

He snatched his spear, he mounted his steed ;
He to the greenwood is gone with speed.

When there he came, a milk-white hind
Started before him as swift as wind.

He pursued it with foot so fleet,
On his forehead stood the heat,

And down his courser's flanks it ran ;
—Evening now to close began ;

When he espied a stream that flowed
Near the Corregan's abode.

Smoothest turf encircled its brink ;
Down from his steed he alit to drink.

By its margin was seated there
The Corregan, combing her golden hair,

Combing it with a comb of gold ;
Richly clad, and bright to behold.

—" Thou art bolder than thou dost know,
Daring to trouble my waters so.

" Me shalt thou on the instant wed,
Or in three days shalt be dead."

—' I will not wed on the instant thee,
Nor yet in three days dead will be.

' When God pleases I shall die,
And already wedded am I ;

' And besides I had rather died
Than to make a fairy my bride.'

—' Sick am I, mother, at heart ; oh, spread,
If thou lovest me, my death-bed.

' Me the fairy has looked to death :
In three days shall I yield my breath.

' Yet though my body in earth they lay,
To her I love, oh, nothing say.'

—Three days after, ' O mother, tell '
She exclaimed, ' why tolls the bell ?

' Why do the priests so mournfully go,
Clad in white, and chanting low ? '

—" A beggar we lodged died yesternight ;
They bury him with the morning light."

—'O mother, where is my husband gone?'
—"He from the town will return anon."

—'O mother, I would to church repair;
Tell me what were meetest to wear:

'Shall it be my robe of blue,
Or my vest of scarlet hue?'

—"It is now the manner to wear
Garments of black, my daughter, there."

When she came to the churchyard ground,
Her husband's grave was the first she found.

—'Death of kin I have not heard,
Yet this earth has been newly stirred.'

—"My daughter, the truth I needs must show;
'Tis thy husband that lies below."

Down she fell upon that floor;
Thence she rose not any more.

But the night next after the day,
When by his body her body lay,

Two tall oaks, both stately and fair,
Marvel to see! arose in air;

And upon their uppermost spray
Two white doves, delightsome and gay:

At dawn of morn they sweetly sung;
And lightly toward heaven at noon they sprung.

THE ETRURIAN KING.

ONE only eye beheld him in his pride,
The old Etrurian monarch,—as he died,

And as they laid him on his bier of stone,
Shield, spear, and arrows laying at his side ;

In golden armour, with his crown of gold,
One only eye the kingly warrior spied :

Nor that eye long—for in the common air
The wondrous pageant might not long abide,

Which had in sealëd sepulchre the wrongs
Of time for thirty centuries defied.

That eye beheld it melt and disappear,
As down an hour-glass the last sand-drops glide.

A few short moments,—and a shrunken heap
Of common dust survived, of all that pride:

And so that gorgeous vision will remain
For evermore to other eye denied :

And he who saw must oftentimes believe
That him his waking senses had belied ;

Since what if all the pageants of this earth
Melt soon away, and may not long abide,

Yet when did ever doom *so* swift before
Even to the glories of the world betide?

THE PRIZE OF SONG.

CHALLENGED by the haughty daughters
Of the old Emathian king,
Strove the Muses at the waters
Of that Heliconian spring—
Proved beside those hallowed fountains
Unto whom the prize of song,
Unto whom those streams and mountains
Should of truest right belong.

First those others in vexed numbers
Mourned the rebel giant brood,
Whom the earth's huge mass encumbers,
Or who writhe, the vulture's food ;
Mourned for earth-born power, which faileth
Heaven to win by might and main ;
Then, thrust back, for ever waileth,
Gnawing its own heart in pain.

Nature shuddered while she hearkened,
Through her veins swift horror ran :
Sun and stars, perturbed and darkened,
To forsake their orbs began.
Back the rivers fled ; the ocean
Howled upon a thousand shores,
As it would with wild commotion
Burst its everlasting doors.

Hushed was not that stormy riot,
Till were heard the sacred Nine,
Singing of the blissful quiet
In the happy seats divine ;

Singing of those thrones immortal,
Whither struggling men attain,
Passing humbly through the portal
Of obedience, toil and pain.

At that melody symphonious
Joy to Nature's heart was sent,
And the spheres, again harmonious,
Made sweet thunder as they went :
Lightly moved, with pleasure dancing,
Little hills and mountains high,
Helicon his head advancing,
Till it almost touched the sky.

—Thou whom once those Sisters holy
On thy lonely path have met,
And, thy front thou stooping lowly,
There their sacred laurel set,
Oh be thine, their mandate owning,
Aye with them to win the prize,
Reconciling and atoning
With thy magic harmonies :

An Arion thou, whose singing
Rouses not a furious sea,
Rather the sea-monsters bringing
Servants to its melody ;
An Amphion, not with passion
To set wild the builders' mind,
But the mystic walls to fashion,
And the stones in one to bind.

ON THE

MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCE OF WALES,

March 10, 1863.

O merchantman who, seeking some fair pearl,
Whose orient splendours should enrich thy life,
And having found one fairest, hast been wise
To win, and make for ever thine and ours,
Henceforth a cynosure of all our eyes,
Set in thine own and England's coronet;
Oh fortunate!—yet not that round thee throng
A people happy in thy happiness,
Nor that boon nature empties in thy lap
Her golden tributes of a golden time,
Nor that the rod of empire may be thine,
The sceptre of the islands of the sea;
Oh happy, not in aught that would divide,
But most in that which links thee with thy kind—
Most happy, that, Heaven favouring, thou hast found
Of thy life's orb the absent hemisphere,
The fulness, and mysterious complement;
Which they who miss, earth's wealthiest, wisest, greatest,
Wander disconsolate, and reap no joy
From life defeated and half unfulfilled,
While they who find, though poorest, are most rich.
Oh well is thee, that in two commonest names,
Yet holiest, names first heard in Paradise,
That in the names of husband and of wife
The sum of thy pure happiness, and hers
Who has fulfilled thy life, is all contained.

POEMS FROM EASTERN SOURCES.

ALEXANDER AT THE GATES OF PARADISE.

A LEGEND FROM THE TALMUD.

FIERCE was the glare of Cashmere's middle day,
When Alexander for Hydaspes bent,
Through trackless wilds urged his impetuous way ;

Yet in that wide and wasteful continent
A little vale he found, so calm, so sweet,
He there awhile to tarry was content.

A crystal stream was sparkling at his feet,
Whereof the Monarch, when his meal was done,
Drank a long draught, to slake his fever heat.

Again he drank, and yet again, as one
Who would have drained that fountain crystalline
Of all its waves, and left it dry anon :

For in his veins, ofttimes a-fire with wine,
And in his bosom, throne of sleepless pride,
The while he drank, went circling peace divine.

It seemed as though all evil passions died
Within him, slaked was every fire accurst ;
So that in rapturous joy aloud he cried :

'Oh! might I find where these pure waters first
Shoot sparkling from their living fountain-head,
Oh, there to quench my spirit's inmost thirst!

'Sure, if we followed where these waters led,
We should at length some fairer region gain
Than yet has quaked beneath our iron tread,—

'Some land that should in very truth contain
All that we dream of beautiful and bright,
And idly dreaming of, pursue in vain;

'That land must stoop beneath our conquering might.
Companions dear, this toil remains alone,
To win that region of unmatched delight.

'O faithful in a thousand labours known,
One toil remains, the noblest and the last;
Let us arise, and make that land our own.'

—Through realms of darkness, wildernesses vast,
All populous with sights and sounds of fear,
In heat and cold, by day and night, he past,

With trumpet clang, with banner and with spear;
Yearning to drink that river, where it sent
Its first pure waters forth, serene and clear;

Till boldest captains sank, their courage spent,
And dying cried—'This stream all search defies'—
But never would he tarry nor relent,

Nor pitched his banners, till before his eyes
Rose high as heaven, in its secluded state,
The mighty verdant wall of Paradise.

And lo ! that stream, which early still and late
He had tracked upward, issued bright and clear
From underneath the angel-guarded gate.

—' And who art thou that hast adventured here,
Daring to startle this serene abode
With flash of mortal weapons, sword and spear?'

So the angelic sentinel of God,
Fire-flashing, to the bold invader cried,
Whose feet profane those holy precincts trod.

The son of Philip without dread replied,—
' Is Alexander's fame unknown to thee,
Which the world knows—mine, who have victory tied

' To my sword's hilt ; and who, while stoop to me
All other lands, would win what rich or fair
This land contains, and hold it mine in fee?'

—' Thou dost thyself proclaim that part or share
Thou hast not here. O man of blood and sin,
Go back—with those blood-stainëd hands despair

This place of love and holy peace to win :
This is the gate of righteousness, and they,
The righteous, only here may enter in.'

Around, before him, lightnings dart and play :
He undismayed—' Of travail long and hard
At least some token let me bear away.'

—' Lo ! then this skull—which if thou wilt regard
And to my question seek the fit reply,
All thy long travail shall have full reward.

'Once in yon hollow circle lodged an eye,
That was, like thine, for ever coveting,
Which worlds on worlds had failed to satisfy.

'Now, while thou gazest on that ghastly ring,
From whence of old a greedy eye outspied,
Say what thing was it,—for there was a thing,—

'Which filled at last and throughly satisfied
The eye that in that hollow cavern dwelt,
So that, "Enough, I have enough," it cried.'

—Blank disappointment at the gift he felt,
And hardly taking, turned in scorn away;
Nor he the riddle of the angel spelt,

But cried unto his captains,—'We delay,
And at these portals lose our time in vain,
By more than mortal terrors kept at bay:

'Come—other lands as goodly spoils contain,
Come—all too long untouched the Indian gold,
The pearls and spice of Araby remain.

'Come, and who will this riddle may unfold.'
Then stood before him, careless of his ire,
An Indian sage, who rendered answer bold—

'Lord of the world, commanded to inquire
What was it that could satisfy an eye,
That organ of man's measureless desire—

'By deed and word *thou* plainly dost reply,
That its desire can nothing tame or quell,
That it can never know sufficiency.

'While thou enlargest thy desire as hell,
Filling thine hand, but filling not thy lust,
Thou dost proclaim man's eye insatiable :

'Such answer from thy lips were only just.
Yet 'twas not so. One came at last, who threw
Into yon face a handful of vile dust,

'Whereof a few small grains did fall into
And filled the vault and hollow of that eye,
When that which suffisance not ever knew
Before, was fain, "I have enough," to cry.'

FROM THE PERSIAN.

DEATH ends well Life's undelight,
Yet Life shudders at Death's sight.

Life the dark hand sees, but not
What it brings, the clear cup bright.

So at sight of Love a heart
Fears that it must perish quite.

Only Self, the tyrant dark,
He must perish in Love's might—

That the heart may truly live,
Breathing free in Love's pure light.

CHIDHER'S WELL.

FROM THE PERSIAN.

THEE have thousands sought in vain
Over land and barren main,

Chidher's Well,—of which men say,
That thou makest young again ;

Fountain of eternal youth,
Washing free from every stain.

To thy waves the agëd moons
Aye betake them, when they wane ;

And the suns their golden light,
While they bathe in thee, retain.

From this fountain drops are flung,
Mingling with the vernal rain,

And the old earth decks itself
With its young attire again.

Thitherward the freckled trout
Up the water-courses strain ;

And the timid wild gazelles
Seek it through the desert plain.

Great Iskander,* mighty lord,
Sought that fountain, but in vain ;

* Alexander.

Through the land of darkness went
In its quest with fruitless pain,

When by wealth of conquered worlds
Did his thirst unslaked remain.

Many more with parchëd lip
Must lie down and dizzy brain,

And of this, a fountain sealed
Unto them, in death complain.

If its springs to thee are known,
Weary wanderer, tell me plain.

From beneath the throne of God
It must well, a lucid vein.

To its sources lead me, Lord,
That I do not thirst again ;

And my lips not any more
Shall the earth's dark waters stain.

LIFE AND DEATH.

A PARABLE.

FROM THE PERSIAN.

THERE went a man through Syrian land,
Leading a Camel by the hand ;
The beast, made wild by some alarm,
Began to threaten sudden harm,
So fiercely snorting, that the man
With all his speed escaping ran—
He ran, and saw a well that lay,
As chance would have it, by the way :
He heard the Camel snort so near,
As almost maddened him with fear,
And crawled into the well, and there
Fell not, but dangled in mid air ;
For from a fissure in the stone,
Which lined its sides, a bush had grown ;
To this he clung with all his might,
From thence lamenting his sad plight :
He saw, what time he looked on high,
The beast's head perilously nigh,
Ready to drag him back again ;
He looked into the bottom then,
And there a Dragon he espied,
Whose horrid jaws were yawning wide,
Agape to swallow him alive,
So soon as he should there arrive.
But as he hung two fears between,
A third by that poor wretch was seen
For where the bush by which he clung
Had from the broken wall outsprung,

He saw two Mice precisely there,
One black, one white, a stealthy pair—
He saw the black one and the white,
How at the root by turns they bite,
They gnaw, they pull, they dig, and still
The earth that held its fibres spill,
Which as it rustling downward ran,
The Dragon to look up began,
Watching how soon the shrub and all
Its burden would together fall.

The man in anguish, fear, despair,
Beleaguered, threatened everywhere,
In state of miserable doubt,
In vain for safety gazed about.
But as he looked around him so,
A twig he spied, and on it grow
Ripe berries from their laden stalk ;
Then his desire he could not balk ;
When these did once his eye engage,
He saw no more the Camel's rage,
Nor Dragon in the underground,
Nor game the busy Mice had found.
The beast above might snort and blow,
The Dragon watch his prey below,
The Mice gnaw near him as they pleased—
The berries eagerly he seized ;
They seemed to him right good to eat ;
A dainty mouthful, welcome treat,
They brought him such a keen delight,
His danger was forgotten quite.

But who, you ask, is this vain man,
Who thus forget his terror can ?

Then learn, O friend, that man art thou !
Listen, and I will tell thee how.
The Dragon in the well beneath,
That is the yawning gulf of death ;
The Camel threatening overhead,
Is life's perplexity and dread.
'Tis thou who, life and death between,
Hangest on this world's sapling green ;
And they who gnaw the root, the twain
Who thee with thy support would fain
Deliver unto death a prey,—
These names the Mice have, Night and Day.
From morn to evening gnaws the white,
And would the root unfasten quite :
From evening till the morn comes back
In deepest stillness gnaws the black ;
And yet, in midst of these alarms,
The berry, Pleasure, has such charms,
That thou the Camel of life's woe,
That thou the Dragon death below,
That thou the two Mice, night and day,
And all forgettest, save the way
To get most berries in thy power,
And on the grave's steep side devour.

LOVE.

LOVE is it, Love divine, that hath an impulse lent
To man, and beast, and worm, and every element.

All riddles Love can solve, all mysteries unfold ;
Ask what thou wilt, and Love the answer will present.

I asked the circling heavens why they so swiftly moved :
Round Love's eternal throne they ever wheeling went.

I asked the waves what made their murmurs never cease :
Shall we in Love's great hymn with silence be content ?

I asked the bickering fire when it would climb no more :
When with the fire above in Love's communion blent.

Night asked I why she hung the world with darkness round :
To consecrate the world for Love a bridal tent.

I asked the westwind why it breathed so soft and warm :
All roses to unfold for Love the westwind meant.

I sought some issue from the labyrinth of Love ;
And found my bliss was there to be for ever pent.

O soul, that until now has sullenly refused
Thy portion in Love's joy, O sullen heart, relent ;

Oh ! see Love's mighty dance, oh ! hear Love's choral hymn ;
Stand up—in dance and hymn to take thy part consent.

THE FALCON.

FROM THE PERSIAN.

HIGH didst thou once in honour stand,
The falcon on a Monarch's hand :

Thine eye, unhooded and unseeled,
All depths of being pierced and scanned :

All worlds of space from end to end
Thy never-wearied pinion spanned.

O falcon of the higher heaven,
Entangled in an earthly band,

While all too eagerly thy prey
Pursuing in a lower land,

In hope abide ;—thy Monarch yet
For thy release shall give command,

And bid thee to resume again
Thy place upon thy Monarch's hand.

THE BREAKER OF IDOLS.

LO! a hundred proud pagodas have the Moslem torches burned,
Lo! a thousand monstrous idols Mahmoud's zeal has overturned.

He from northern Ghuznee issuing, through the world this word doth bear,—
'God is ONE; ye shall no other with the peerless One compare:'

Till in India's furthest corner he has reached the costliest shrine
Of the Brahmins, idol-tending—which they held the most divine.

Profits not the wild resistance; stands the victor at the gate,
With this hugest idol's ruin all his work to consummate.

Forth in long procession streaming came the suppliant priests to meet—
Came with ransom and with homage the resistless one to greet.

Ransom vast of gold they offer, pearls of price and jewels rare,
Purchase of their idol's safety, this their dearest will he spare.

And there wanted not who counselled, that he should his hand withhold,
Should that single image suffer, and accept the proffered gold.

But he rather,—'God has raised me, not to make a
shameful gain,
Trafficking in hideous idols, with a service false and vain ;

But to count my work unfinished, till I sweep them from
the world :
Stand, and see the thing ye sued for, by this hand to ruin
hurled.'

High he reared his battle-axe, and heavily came down the
blow :
Reeled the abominable image, broken, bursten, to and fro ;

From its shattered side revealing pearls and diamonds,
showers of gold ;
More than all that proffered ransom, more than all a
hundred fold.

—Thou too, Heaven's commissioned warrior to cast down
each idol throne
In thy heart's profanëd temple, make this faithful deed
thine own.

Still they plead and still they promise, wilt thou suffer
them to stand,
They have pleasures, gifts and treasures, to enrich thee
at command.

Heed not thou, but boldly strike them ; let descend the
faithful blow ;
From their wreck and from their ruin first will thy true
riches flow.

Thou shalt lose thy life, and find it ; thou shalt boldly
cast it forth ;
And then back again receiving, know it in its endless
worth.

FROM THE PERSIAN.

HAPPY name I you, my brethren, who not ever doomed to roam,
In the eternal Father's mansion from the first have dwelt at home.

Round the Father's throne for ever standing, in his countenance
Sunning you, you see the seven circling heavens around you dance.

Me He has cast out to exile, in a distant land to learn
How I should love Him, the Father, how for that true country yearn.

I lie here, a star of Heaven, fall'n upon this gloomy place,
Scarce remembering what bright courses I was once allowed to trace.

Still in dreams it comes upon me, that I once on wings did soar ;
But or ere my flight commences, this my dream must all be o'er.

When the lark is climbing upward on the sunbeam, then I feel
Even as though my spirit also hidden pinions could reveal.

I a rose-bush to this lower soil of earth am fastly bound,
And with heavenly dew besprinkled, still am rooted to the ground.

Yet the life is struggling upward ; striving still with all
their might
Yearning buds their cups to open to the warmth and
heavenly light.

From its stalk released, my flower soars not yet—a butter-
fly ;
But meanwhile my fragrant incense evermore I breathe
on high.

From this gloomy land of vapours, where the hurricanes
surprise,
Lightning scorches, and hail lashes, and the thunder
terrifies,

By my Gardener to his garden I shall once transplanted
be,
There where I have been already written from eternity.

O my brothers blooming yonder, unto Him, the Ancient,
pray,
That the hour of my transplanting He will not for long
delay.

THE BANISHED KINGS.

ON a fair ship, borne swiftly o'er the deep,
A man was lying, wrapt in dreamless sleep ;
When unawares upon a sunken rock
That vessel struck, and shattered with the shock.
But strange ! the plank where lay the sleeper bore
Him, wrapt in deep sleep ever, to the shore :
It bore him safely through the foam and spray,
High up on land, where couched 'mid flowers he lay.
Sweet tones first woke him from his sleep, when round
His couch observant multitudes he found :
All hailed him then, and did before him bow,
And with one voice exclaimed,—'Our King art thou.'
With jubilant applause they bore him on,
And set him wondering on a royal throne :
And some his limbs with royal robes arrayed,
And some before him duteous homage paid,
And some brought gifts, all rare and costly things,
Nature's and Art's profusest offerings :
Around him counsellors and servants prest,
All eager to accomplish his behest.
Wish unaccomplished of his soul was none ;
The thing that he commanded, it was done.

Much he rejoiced, and he had well-nigh now
Forgotten whence he hither came, and how ;
Until at eve, of homage weary grown,
He craved a season to be left alone.
Alone in hall magnificent he sate,
And mused upon the wonder of his fate ;
When lo ! an aged counsellor, a seer,
Before unnoticed, to the King drew near ;

—'And thee would I too gratulate, my son,
Who hast thy reign in happy hour begun :
Seen hast thou the beginning,—yet attend,
While I shall also show to thee the end.
That this new fortune do not blind thee quite,
Both sides regard, the darker with the bright :
Heed what so many who have reigned before,
Failing to heed, now rue for evermore.
Though sure thy state and strong thy throne appear,
King only art thou for a season here ;
A time is fixed, albeit unknown to thee,
Which when it comes, thou banished hence shalt be.
Round this fair spot, though hidden from the eye
By mist and vapour, many islands lie :
Bare are their coasts, and dreary and forlorn,
And unto them the banished kings are borne ;
On each of these an exiled king doth mourn.
For when a new king comes, they bear away
The old, whom now no vassals more obey ;
Stripped of his royalties and glories lent,
Unhonoured, unattended he is sent
Unto his dreary island-banishment ;
While all who girt his throne with service true,
Now fall away from him, to serve the new.
What I have told thee, lay betimes to heart,
And ere thy rule is ended, take thy part,
That thou hereafter on thine isle forlorn
Do not thy vanished kingdom vainly mourn,
When nothing of its pomp to thee remains
On that bare shore, save only memory's pains.

'Much, O my Prince ! my words have thee distrest,
Thy head has sunk in sorrow on thy breast ;
Yet idle sorrow helps not—I will show
A wiser way, which shall true help bestow.

This counsel take—to others given in vain,
While no belief from them my words might gain.
Know then, whilst thou art Monarch here, there stand
Helps for the future many at command ;
Then, while thou canst, employ them to adorn
That island whither thou must once be borne.
Unbuilt and waste and barren now that strand,
There gush no fountains from the thirsty sand,
No groves of palm-trees have been planted there,
Nor plants of odorous scent perfume that air ;
While all alike have shunned to contemplate
That they should ever change their flattering state.
But make thou there provision of delight,
Till that which now so threatens, may invite ;
Bid there thy servants build up royal towers,
And change its barren sands to leafy bowers :
Bid fountains there be hewn, and cause to bloom
Immortal amaranths, shedding rich perfume.
So when the world, which speaks thee now so fair
And flatters so, again shall strip thee bare,
And drive thee naked forth in harshest wise,
Thou joyfully wilt seek thy paradise.
There will not vex thee memories of the past,
While hope will heighten here the joys thou hast.
This do, while yet the power is in thine hand,
While thou hast helps so many at command.'

Then raised the Prince his head with courage new,
And what the Sage advised, prepared to do.
He ruled his realm with meekness, and meanwhile
He marvellously decked the chosen isle ;
Bade there his servants build up royal towers,
And change its barren sands to leafy bowers ;
Bade fountains there be hewn, and caused to bloom
Immortal amaranths, shedding rich perfume.

And when he long enough had kept his throne,
To him sweet odours from that isle were blown ;
Then knew he that its gardens blooming were,
And all the yearnings of his soul were there.
Grief was it not to him, but joy, when they
His crown and sceptre bade him quit one day ;
When him his servants rudely did dismiss,
'Twas not the sentence of his ended bliss,
But pomp and power he cheerfully forsook,
And to his isle a willing journey took,
And found diviner pleasure on that shore,
Than all, his proudest state had known before,

SOLOMON.

WHAT child of dust with glory was arrayed
Like Solomon?—his bidding, while he stood
In his obedience and first state of good,
The upper and the under worlds obeyed—
All spirits, good and evil ; yea, he made
Hell's concourse and involuntary brood
Do drudging work for him—hew stones, bring wood,
And in the rearing of God's temple aid.
But when he fell from God, that self-same hour
They fell from him—against him dared to turn,
Defied his might, his ring, his seal of power ;
Made him the subject of their mock and scorn ;
While before them he now must crouch and cower,
Of strength and wisdom, as of goodness, shorn.

THE

BALLADS OF HAROUN AL RASCHID.

I.

THE SPILT PEARLS.

HIS courtiers of the Caliph crave—
'Oh, say how this may be,
That of thy slaves this Ethiop slave
Is best beloved by thee?

'For he is hideous as the night:
But when has ever chose
A nightingale for his delight
A hueless scentless rose?'

The Caliph then—'No features fair,
Nor comely mien are his:
Love is the beauty he doth wear,
And Love his glory is.

'Once when a camel of my train
There fell in narrow street,
From broken casket rolled amain
Rich pearls before my feet.

'I beckoning to my slaves, that I
Would freely give them these,
At once upon the spoil they fly,
The costly boon to seize.

One only at my side remained—
Beside this Ethiop none:
He, moveless as the steed he reined,
Behind me sat alone.

'"What will thy gain, good fellow, be,
Thus lingering at my side?"—
—"My King, that I shall faithfully
Have guarded thee," he cried.

'"True servant's title he may wear,
He only, who has not
For his lord's gifts, how rich soe'er,
His lord himself forgot!"'

—So thou alone dost walk before
Thy God with perfect aim,
From Him desiring nothing more
Beside Himself to claim.

For if thou not to Him aspire,
But to his gifts alone,
Not Love, but covetous desire,
Has brought thee to his throne.

While such thy prayer, it climbs above
In vain; the golden key
Of God's rich treasure-house of love
Thine own will never be.

II.

THE BARMECIDES.

HAROUN the Just !—yet once that name
Of Just the ruler ill became,
By whose too hasty sentence died
The royal-hearted Barmecide.
O Barmecide, of hand and heart
So prompt, so forward to impart,
Of bounty so unchecked and free,
That once a poet sung, how he
Would fear thy very hand to touch,
Lest he should learn to give too much,
Lest, catching the contagion thence
Of thy unmatched munificence,
A beggar he should soon remain,
Helpless his bounty to restrain—
O Barmecide of royal heart,
My childhood's tears again will start
Into mine eyes, the tears I shed,
As I remember, when I read
Of harsh injustice done to thee,
And all thy princely family.
—What marvel that the Caliph, stung
With secret consciousness of wrong,
Or now desiring every trace
Of that large bounty to efface,
With penalty of death forbade
That mourning should for them be made ;
That any should with grateful song
Their memory in men's hearts prolong ?

—'And who art thou, that day by day
Hast dared my mandate disobey ?

Who art thou whom my guards have found,
Now standing on some grass-grown mound,
Now wandering 'mid the ruined towers,
Fall'n palaces, and wasted bowers
Of those at length for traitors known,
And by my justice overthrown—
Singing a plaintive dirge for them
Whom my just vengeance did condemn ;
Till ever, as I learn, around
Thy steps a listening crowd is found,
Who still unto thy sad lament
Do with their sobs and tears consent ;
While in the bosom of that throng
Rise thoughts that do their Monarch wrong ?
What doom I did for this assign
Thou knewest, and that doom is thine.'

But then the offender :—' Give me room,
And I will gladly take my doom,
O King, to spend my latest breath,
Ere I am borne unto my death,
In telling for what highest grace
I was beholden to that race,
Whose memory my heart hath kept,
Whose perished glories I have wept.
For then, at least, it will appear
That not in disobedience mere
Thy mandate high I overpast.
—O King, I was the least and last
Of all the servitors of him,
Whose glory in thy frown grew dim,—
The least and last—yet he one day
To me, his meanest slave, did say
That he was fain my guest to be,
And the next day would sup with me.

More time I willingly had craved,
But my excuses all he waved,
And by no train accompanied,
His two sons only at his side,
At my poor lodging lighted down,
Which at the limits of the town
Stood in a close and narrow street.
Him I and mine did humbly greet,
Standing before him while he shared
What we meanwhile had best prepared
Of entertainment, though the best
Was poor and mean for such a guest.
But supper done, with cheerful mien,
'Thy house,' he cried, 'I have not seen,
Thy gardens ;—let me pace awhile
Along some cool and shadowy aisle.'
I thought he mocked me, but replied,
'Possessions have I not so wide :
For house, another room with this
Our only habitation is ;
And garden have I none to show,
Unless that narrow court below,
Shut in with lofty walls, that name
In right of four dwarf shrubs may claim.'
—'Nay, nay,' he answered, 'there is more,
If only we could find the door.'
Again I told him, but in vain,
That he had seen my whole domain.
—'Nay, go then quick, a mason call.'
Him bade he straightway pierce the wall.
—'But shall we in this wise invade
A neighbour's house?'—No heed he paid.
And I stood dumb, and wondering
Whereto he would the issue bring.
Anon he through the opening past,
He and his sons, and I the last ;

When suddenly myself I found
In ample space of garden ground,
Or rather in a Paradise
Of rare and wonderful device,
With stately walks and alleys wide,
Far stretching upon every side ;
And streams upon whose either bank
Stood lofty platanes, rank by rank,
And marble fountains, scattering high
Illumined dew-drops in the sky ;
And making a low tinkling sound,
As sliding down from mound to mound,
They did at last their courses take
Down to a calm and lucid lake,
By which, on gently sloping height,
There stood a palace of delight ;
And many slaves, but all of rare
And perfect beauty, marshalled there,
Did each to me incline the knee,
Exclaiming all—" Thy servants we."

'And then my lord cried laughing—" Nay,
When this is thine, how could'st thou say
That thou had'st shown me all before ?
Thine is it all."—He said no more,
But at my benefactor's feet
I falling, thanks would render meet.
He, scarcely listening, turned his head,
And to his eldest son he said :
" This house, these gardens, 'twere in vain,
Unless enabled to maintain,
That he should call them his ;—my son,
Let us not leave this grace half done."
Who then replied—" My farms beyond
The Tigris I by sealëd bond

This night before we part, will see
Made over unto him in fee."
—" 'Tis well ; but there will months ensue,
Ere his incomings will be due.
What shall there, the meanwhile, be done?"
He turned unto his younger son,
Who answered—" I will bid that gold,
Ten thousand pieces, shall be told
Unto his steward presently ;
These shall his urgent needs supply."
'Twas done upon that very eve ;
And done, anon they took their leave,
And left me free to contemplate
The wonders of my novel state.

' Prince of the Faithful, mighty King,
My fortunes from this source had spring,
Which, if they since that time have grown,
Him their first author still they own.
Nor when that name, which *was* the praise
Of all the world, on evil days
Had fall'n, was I content to let
Be quite forgotten the large debt
I owed to him ;—content to die,
If such shall be thy pleasure high,
And my offence shall seem to thee
Deserving of such penalty.'

What marvel that the King who heard
Was in his inmost bosom stirred?
What marvel that he owned the force
Of late regret and vain remorse?
That spreading palm, whose boughs had made,
Far stretching, such an ample shade
For many a wanderer through life's waste,
He had hewn down in guilty haste ;

That fountain free, that springing well
Of goodness inexhaustible,
His hand had stopped it, ne'er again
To slake the thirst of weary men ;
That genial sun, which evermore
Did on a cold chill world outpour
Its rays of love and life and light,
'Twas he who quenched in darkest night.
What marvel that he owned the force
Of late regret and vain remorse,
And (all he could) now freely gave
The life the other did not crave ?
Nay more, the offender did dismiss
With gifts and praise ; nor only this,
But did the unrighteous law reverse,
Which had forbidden to rehearse,
And in the minds of men prolong,
By grateful speech or plaintive song,
The bounteous acts and graces wide,
The goodness of the Barmecide.

III.

THE FESTIVAL.

FIVE hundred princely guests before
Haroun Al Raschid sate :
Five hundred princely guests or more
Admired his royal state :

For never had that glory been
So royally displayed,
Nor ever such a gorgeous scene
Had eye of man surveyed.

He, most times meek of heart, yet now
Of spirit too elate,
Exclaimed—'Before me Cæsars bow,
On me two empires wait.

'Yet all our glories something lack,
We do our triumphs wrong,
Until to us reflected back
In mirrors clear of song.

'Call him then, unto whom this power
Is given, this skill sublime—
Now win from us some splendid dower
With song that fits the time.'

—'My King, as I behold thee now,
May I behold thee still,
While prostrate worlds before thee bow,
And wait upon thy will!

'May evermore this clear pure heaven,
Whence every speck and stain
Of trouble far away is driven,
Above thy head remain!'

The Caliph cried—'Thou wishest well;
There waits thee golden store
For this—but, oh! resume the spell,
I fain would listen more.'

—'Drink thou life's sweetest goblet up
O King, and may its wine,
For others' lips a mingled cup,
Be all unmixed for thine.

'Live long—the shadow of no grief
Come ever near to thee :
As thou in height of place art chief,
So chief in gladness be.'

Haroun Al Raschid cried again—
'I thank thee—but proceed,
And now take up a higher strain,
And win a higher meed.'

Around that high magnific hall
One glance the poet threw
On courtiers, king, and festival,
And did the strain renew :

—'And yet, and yet—shalt thou at last
Lie stretched on bed of death :
Then, when thou drawest thick and fast
With sobs thy painful breath,

'When Azrael glides through guarded gate,
Through hosts that camp around
Their lord in vain—and will not wait,
When thou art sadly bound

'Unto thine house of dust alone,
O King, when thou must die,—
This pomp a shadow thou shalt own,
This glory all a lie.'

Then darkness on all faces hung,
And through the banquet went
Low sounds the murmuring guests among
Of angry discontent;

And him anon they fiercely urge—
'What guerdon shall be thine?
What does it, this untimely dirge,
'Mid feasts, and flowers, and wine?

'Our lord demanded in his mirth
A strain to heighten glee;
But, lo! at thine his tears come forth
In current swift and free.'

—'Peace—not to him rebukes belong,
But rather highest grace;
He gave me what I asked, a song
To fit the time and place.'

All voices at that voice were stilled;
Again the Caliph cried,—
'He saw our mouths with laughter filled,
He saw us drunk with pride;

'And bade us know that every road,
By monarch trod or slave,
Thick set with thorns, with roses strewed,
Must issue in the grave.'

THE TALENTS.

IMITATED FROM THE PERSIAN.

THOU that in life's crowded city art arrived, thou know'st not how,
By what path or on what errand—list and learn thine errand now.

From the palace to the city on the business of thy King
Thou wert sent at early morning, to return at evening.

Dreamer waken, loiterer hasten ; what thy task is, understand ;
Thou art here to purchase substance, and the price is in thy hand.

Has the tumult of the market all thy sense confused and drowned ?
Do its glistering wares entice thee ? or its shouts and cries confound ?

Oh ! beware lest thy Lord's business be forgotten, while thy gaze
Is on every show and pageant which the giddy square display's.

Barter not his gold for pebbles ; do not trade in vanities—
Pearls there are of price and jewels for the purchase of the wise.

And know this, at thy returning thou wilt surely find the King
With an open book before him, waiting to make reckoning.

Then large honours will the faithful earnest service of one day
Reap of him, but one day's folly largest penalties will pay.

THE EASTERN NARCISSUS.

THOU art the fox, O man, that, maugre all
His cunning, did into the water fall.
This fox was travelling once o'er hill and dell,
And reached at length the margin of a well ;
His head he stooped into the well, when, lo !
Another fox did in the water show.
He winks, he nods—the other fox replies :
'What, ho ! we must be better friends,' he cries ;
And more acquaintance covetous to win,
Without a thought jumped Reynard headlong in.
He reached the bottom at a single bound,
But there no fox beside himself he found.
Upward again he now would gladly spring,
But to ascend was no such easy thing :
He splashes, struggles, and in sad voice cries,
'Fool that I was ! I deemed myself more wise.
Ah wretch ! will no one come unto my aid ?'—
But prayer and effort both were vainly made :
Soon did the water drag him down to death ;
With a last cry he sank the waves beneath.

Thou art the fox of whom the fable tells ;
This world of sense the devil's well of wells :
Thou saw'st reflected thine own image there,
And didst plunge headlong in without a care :
Oh happy ! if thou struggle back to day,
Ere the strong whirlpool drags thee down for aye.

THE SEASONS.

I. WINTER.

PURE ermine now the mountains wear,
And clothe with this their shoulders bare.

The dark pine wears the snow, as head
Of Ethiop doth white turban wear.

The floods are armed with silver shields,
Through which the Sun's sword cannot fare ;

For he who once in mid heaven rode,
In golden arms, on golden chair,

Now through small corner of the sky
Creeps low, nor warms the foggy air.

To mutter 'twixt their teeth the streams,
In icy fetters, scarcely dare.

Hushed is the busy hum of life ;
'Tis silence in the earth and air.

From mountains issues the gaunt wolf,
And from its forest depths the bear.

Where is the garden's beauty now ?
The thorn is here ; the rose, oh where ?

The trees like giant skeletons,
Wave high their fleshless arms and bare ;

Or stand like wrestlers stripped and bold,
And strongest winds to battle dare.

It seems a thing impossible
That earth her glories should repair ;

That ever this bleak world again
Should bright and beauteous mantle wear,

Or sounds of life again be heard
In this dead earth and vacant air.

II. SPRING.

WHO was it that so lately said,
All pulses in thine heart were dead,

Old Earth, that now in festal robes
Appearest, as a bride new wed?

O wrapt so late in winding-sheet,
Thy winding-sheet, oh ! where is fled?

Lo! 'tis an emerald carpet now,
Where the young monarch, Spring, may tread.

He comes,—and, a defeated king,
Old Winter to the hills is fled.

The warm wind broke his frosty spear,
And loosed the helmet from his head ;

And he weak showers of arrowy sleet
From his strongholds has vainly sped.

All that was sleeping is awake,
And all is living that was dead.

Who listens now, can hear the streams
Leap tinkling down their pebbly bed ;

Or see them, from their fetters free,
Like silver snakes the meadows thread.

The joy, the life, the hope of earth,
They slept awhile, they were not dead :

Oh thou who say'st thy sere heart ne'er
With verdure can again be spread ;

Oh thou who mournest them that sleep,
Low lying in an earthy bed ;

Look out on this reviving world,
And be new hopes within thee bred.

III. SUMMER.

NOW seems all nature to conspire,
As to dissolve the world in fire,

Which dies among its odorous sweets,
A Phœnix on its funeral pyre.

Simoom breathes hotly from the waste,
The green earth quits her green attire ;

Floats o'er the plain the liquid heat,
Cheating the traveller's fond desire—

Illusion fair of lake and stream,
Receding as he draweth nigher.

Ice is more precious now than gold,
Snow more than silver men desire.

'Tis far to seek unfailing wells
For tender maid or aged sire ;

Men know the worth of water now,
And learn to prize God's blessing higher ;

The shallow pools have disappeared,
Caked into iron is the mire.

Through clouds of dust the crimson sun
Glares on the earth in lurid ire ;

The parchëd earth with thirsty lips
Is gasping, ready to expire.

Oh happy, who by liquid streams
In shady gardens can retire,

Where murmuring falls and whispering trees
Sweet slumber to invite conspire ;

Or where he may deceive the time
With volume sage, or pensive lyre.

IV. AUTUMN.

THINE, Autumn, is unwelcome lore—
To tell the world its pomp is o'er :

To whisper in the rose's ear,
That all her beauty is no more ;

And bid her own the faith how vain,
That Spring to her so lately swore.

A queen deposed, she quits her state ;
The nightingales her fall deplore :

The hundred-voicëd bird may woo
The thousand-leavëd flower no more.

The jasmine sinks its head in shame,
The sharp east wind its tresses shore ;

And robbed in passing cruelly
The tulip of the crown it wore.

The lily's sword is broken now,
That was so bright and keen before;

And not a blast can blow, but strews
With leaf of gold the earth's dank floor.

The piping winds sing Nature's dirge,
As through the forest bleak they roar,

Whose leafy screen, like locks of eld,
Each day shows scantier than before.

Thou fadest as a flower, O man !
Of food for musing here is store.

O man ! thou fallest as a leaf :
Pace thoughtfully earth's leaf-strewn floor ;

Welcome the sadness of the time,
And lay to heart this natural lore.

BY Grecian annals it remained untold,
But may be read in Eastern legend old,
How when great Alexander died, he bade
That his two hands uncovered should be laid
Outside the bier—for men therewith to see,
(Men who had seen him in his majesty,)
That he had gone the common way of all,
And nothing now his own in death might call ;
Nor of the treasures of two empires aught
Within those empty hands unto the grave had brought.

MOSES AND JETHRO.

WHEN Moses once on Horeb's rocky steep,
A banished man, was keeping Jethro's sheep,
What time his flocks along the hills and dells
Made music with their bleatings and their bells,
He by the thoughts that stirred within him, drawn
Deep in the mountain, heard at early dawn
One who in prayer did all his soul outpour,
With strong heart-earnestness, but nothing more :
For strange his words were, savage and uncouth,
And little did he know in very sooth
Of that great Lord to whom his vows were made.
The other for a moment listening staid,
Until—his patience altogether spent—
'Good friend, for whom are these same noises meant?
For Him who dwells on high? this babbling vain,
Which vexes even a man's ear with pain?
Oh peace! this is not God to praise, but blame ;
Unmannerly applause brings only shame :
Oh, stop thy mouth ; thou dost but heap up sin,
Such prayer as this can no acceptance win,
But were enough to make God's blessings cease.'
Rebuked, the simple herdsman held his peace,
And only crying—'Thou hast rent my heart,'
He fled into the desert far apart :
While with himself, and with his zeal content,
His steps the son of Amram homeward bent,
And ever to himself applauses lent—
Much wondering that he did not find the same
From his adopted sire, but rather blame,
Who having heard, replied—
'Was this well done?
What wouldst thou have to answer, O my son,

If God should say in anger unto thee—
'Why hast thou driven my worshipper from Me?
Why hast thou robbed Me of my dues of prayer?
Well pleasing offering in my sight they were,
And music in mine ears, if not in thine.'
HE doth its bounds to every soul assign,
Its voice, its language—using which to tell
His praise, He counts that it doth praise Him well;
And when there is a knocking at Heav'n's gate,
And at Heav'n's threshold many suppliants wait,
Then simple Love will often enter in,
Where haughty Science may no entrance win.
That poor man's words were rougher husks than thine,
Which yet might hold a kernel more divine,
Rude vessel guarding a more precious wine.
All prayer is childlike; falls as short of HIM
The wisdom of the wisest Seraphim,
As the child's small conceit of heavenly things;
A line to sound his depths no creature brings.
Before the Infinite, the One, the All,
Must every difference disappear and fall,
There is no wise nor simple, great nor small.
For Him the little clod of common earth
Has to the diamond no inferior worth;
Nor doth the Ocean, world-encompassing,
Unto his thought more sense of vastness bring
Than tiny dewdrop; atoms in his eye
A sun, and a sun-mote, dance equally:
Not that the great (here understand aright),
Is worthless as the little in his sight,
Rather the little precious as the great,
And, pondered in his scales, of equal weight:
So that herein lies comfort—not despair,
As though we were too little for his care.
God is so great, there can be nothing small
To Him—so loving He embraces all,—

So wise, the wisdom and simplicity
Of man for Him must on a level be :
But being this, more prompt to feel the wrong,
And to resent it with displeasure strong,
When from Him there is rudely, proudly turned
The meanest soul that loved Him, and that yearned
After his grace. Oh haste then and begone,
Rebuild the altar thou hast overthrown ;
Replace the offering which on that did stand,
Till rudely scattered by thy hasty hand—
Removing, if thou canst, what made it rise
A faulty and imperfect sacrifice :
And henceforth, in this gloomy world and dark,
Prize every taper yielding faintest spark,
And if perchance it burn not clear and bright,
Trim, if thou canst, but do not quench it quite.'

GHAZEL.

WHAT is the good man and the wise?
Ofttimes a pearl which none doth prize ;

Or jewel rare, which men account
A common pebble, and despise.

Set forth upon the world's bazaar,
It mildly gleams, but no one buys ;

Till it in anger Heaven withdraws
From the world's undiscerning eyes :

And in its shell the pearl again,
And in its mine the jewel lies.

PROVERBS.

TURKISH AND PERSIAN.

I.

SECTS seventy-two, men say, the world infest,
And each and all lie hidden in thy breast.

II.

One staff of Moses, slight as it appears,
Will break in shivers Pharaoh's thousand spears.

III.

Forget not death, O man ! for thou may'st be
Of one thing certain,—he forgets not thee.

IV.

The world's a tavern, where to-night men swill ;
To-morrow brings the head-ache and the bill.

V.

Speaks one of good which falls not to thy lot,
He also speaks of ill which thou hast not.

VI.

Boast not thy service rendered to the King ;
'Tis grace enough he lets thee service bring.

VII.

Lies once thy cart in quagmire overthrown,
Thy path to thee by thousands will be shown.

VIII.

Oh square thyself for use : a stone that may
Fit in the wall, is left not in the way.

IX.

Never the game has happy issue won,
Which with the cotton has the fire begun.

X.

The sandal tree, most sacred tree of all,
Perfumes the very axe which bids it fall.

XI.

Dost thou the raven for a guide invite,
Count it not strange on carrion to alight.

XII.

Each man has more of four things than he knows ;
What four are these?—sins, debts, and years, and foes.

XIII.

The king but with one apple has made free,
And straight his servants have cut down the tree.

XIV.

Two friends will in a needle's eye repose,
But the whole world is narrow for two foes.

XV.

Rejoice not when thine enemy doth die,
Thou hast not won immortal life thereby.

XVI.

Be bold to bring forth fruit, though stick and stone
At the fruit-bearing trees are flung alone.

XVII.

This world is like a carcass in the way :
Who eagerly throng round it, dogs are they.

XVIII.

While in thy lips thy words thou dost confine,
Thou art their lord : once uttered, they are thine.

XIX.

Oh seize the instant time ; none ever will
With waters that have past impel the mill.

XX.

Boldly thy bread upon the waters throw ;
And if the fishes do not, God will know.

XXI.

What will not time and toil ?—by these a worm
Will into silk a mulberry leaf transform.

XXII.

There is no ointment for the wolf's sore eyes,
Like clouds of dust which from the sheep arise.

XXIII.

When what thou willest has befall'n not, still
This help remains, what has befall'n to will.

XXIV.

Inquire not if thy soul be foul or fair,
But if tow'rd God its efforts striving are.

XXV.

The lily with ten tongues can hold its peace ;
Wilt thou with one from babbling never cease ?

XXVI.

How shall the praise of silence best be told ?
To speak is silver, to hold peace is gold.

XXVII.

Thy word unspoken thou canst any day
Speak, but thy spoken ne'er again unsay.

XXVIII.

The world's great wheel in silence circles round,
A housewife's spindle with unceasing sound.

XXIX.

O babbler, couldst thou but the cause divine,
Why one tongue only, but two ears are thine!

XXX.

What mystic roses in thy breast will blow,
If on the wind their leaves thou straightway strow?

HARMOSAN.

NOW the third and fatal conflict for the Persian throne was done,
And the Moslem's fiery valour had the crowning victory won.

Harmosan, the last and boldest the invader to defy,
Captive overborne by numbers, they were bringing forth to die.

Then exclaimed that noble captive—'Lo! I perish in my thirst,
Give me but one drink of water, and let then arrive the worst.'

In his hand he took the goblet, but awhile the draught forbore,
Seeming doubtfully the purpose of the foemen to explore.

Well might then have paused the bravest, for around him angry foes
With a hedge of naked weapons did that lonely man enclose.

'But what fear'st thou?' cried the Caliph;—'is it, friend, a secret blow?
Fear it not; our gallant Moslem no such treacherous dealing know.

'Thou may'st quench thy thirst securely, for thou shalt not die before
Thou hast drunk that cup of water; this reprieve is thine—no more.'

Quick the Satrap dashed the goblet down to earth with ready hand,
And the liquid sank for ever, lost amid the burning sand.

'Thou hast said that mine my life is, till the water of that cup
I have drained—then bid thy servants that spilt water gather up.'

For a moment stood the Caliph as by doubtful passions stirred;
Then exclaimed,—'For ever sacred must remain a monarch's word.

'Bring another cup, and straightway to the noble Persian give:
Drink, I said before, and perish; now I bid thee drink and live.'

LIFE THROUGH DEATH.

I.

A PAGAN king tormented fiercely all,
Who would not on his senseless idols call,
Nor worship them :—and him were brought before
A mother and her child, with many more.
The child, fast bound, was flung into the flame,
Her faith the mother did in fear disclaim :
But when she cried—'O sweetest, live as I,'
He answered—'Mother dear, I do not die ;
Come, mother, bliss of heaven is here my gain,
Although I seem to you in fiery pain.
This fire serves only for your eyes to cheat,
Like Jesus' breath of balm 'tis cool and sweet.
Come, learn what riches with our God are stored,
And how He feeds me at the angelic board.
Come, prove this fire ; like water-floods it cools,
While your world's water burns like sulphur pools.
Come, Abraham's secret, when he found alone
Sweet roses in the furnace, here is known.
Into a world of death thou barest me ;
O mother, death, not life, I owed to thee.
Fair world I deemed it once of glorious pride,
Till in this furnace I was deified ;
But now I know it for a dungeon-tomb,
Since God has brought me into larger room.
Oh ! now at length I live : from my pure heaven
Each cloud, that stained it once, away is driven :
Come, mother, come, and with thee many bring ;
Cry, "Here is spread the banquet of the King ;"
Come, all ye faithful, come, and dare to prove
The bitter-sweet, the pain and bliss of love.'

So cried the child unto that crowd of men ;
All hearts with fiery longings kindled then ;
Towàrd the pile they headlong rushing came,
And soon their souls fed sweetly on the flame.

II.

A DEWDROP falling on the wild sea-wave,
Exclaimed in fear—' I perish in this grave ;'
But in a shell received, that drop of dew
Unto a pearl of marvellous beauty grew ;
And, happy now, the grace did magnify
Which thrust it forth, as it had feared, to die ;—
Until again, ' I perish quite,' it said,
Torn by rude diver from its ocean bed :
Oh unbelieving !—so it came to gleam,
Chief jewel in a monarch's diadem.

III.

THE seed must die, before the corn appears
Out of the ground, in blade and fruitful ears.
Low have those ears before the sickle lain,
Ere thou canst treasure up the golden grain.
The grain is crushed, before the bread is made ;
And the bread broke, ere life to man conveyed.
Oh ! be content to die, to be laid low,
And to be crushed, and to be broken so,
If thou upon God's table may'st be bread,
Life-giving food for souls an-hungerëd.

THE WORLD.

'O BEAUTEOUS world, what features fair
Thine needs would show beyond compare,
If it were possible to find
Thy glories all in one combined !
Show me, O Lord, the world—the bright
Fair world reveal unto my sight.'

Such prayer the young man made, whose way
Soon after through the desert lay,
Where he far off a woman spied,
Wandering, by none accompanied.
'Who art thou?' he exclaimed.—"In me
See her whom thou hast longed to see."
—'What meanest thou?' More plain reply
This time she made—"The World am I."
—'Then let me see thy countenance fair,
Whose beauty doth all hearts ensnare.'
She from her face the veil withdrew,
And straight the hidden was in view ;
A visage painted all and bleared,
Where signs of all things foul appeared :
One bloody hand she raised on high,
Crooked was the other and awry.
'How? what is this?' he shuddering
Exclaimed—'what mean'st thou, loathsome thing?'
"I with this bloody hand," she said,
"Strike evermore my lovers dead :
That crookëd hand its shape has won
With beckoning new lovers on ;
Those ever hurl I forth with might,
And these with sorceries I invite.

Myself must wonder, being so,
I never dearth of lovers know."
—'But tell me yet, how this may be,
That when such thousands wait on thee
Already, thou dost ever seek
More lovers still?' She then did speak :
"Though these be many, never yet
A man among them have I met ;
Who rightly bear of man the name,
My company avoid like shame ;
And thus remain I desolate,
Even while on me such thousands wait."

My brother, let her answer be
Deep graven on thy memory :
A man, my brother, wouldst thou prove,
Far keep thee from this beldame's love.

THE SUPPLIANT.

ALL night the lonely suppliant prayed,
All night his earnest crying made ;
Till standing by his side at morn,
The Tempter said in bitter scorn :
'Oh ! peace : what profit do you gain
From empty words and babblings vain?'
"Come, Lord—oh, come !" you cry alway ;
You pour your heart out night and day ;
Yet still no murmur of reply,—
No voice that answers, "Here am I."'

Then sank that stricken heart in dust,
That word had withered all its trust :

No strength retained it now to pray,
For faith and hope had fled away :
And ill that mourner now had fared,
Thus by the Tempter's art ensnared,
But that at length beside his bed
His sorrowing Angel stood, and said,—
'Doth it repent thee of thy love,
That never now is heard above
Thy prayer, that now not any more
It knocks at heav'n's gate as before?'

—"I am cast out—I find no place,
No hearing at the throne of grace :
'Come, Lord—oh, come!' I cry alway,
I pour my heart out night and day,
Yet never until now have won
The answer,—'Here am I, my son.'"

—'Oh, dull of heart! enclosed doth lie
In each "Come, Lord," a "Here am I."
Thy love, thy longing, are not thine,
Reflections of a love divine :
Thy very prayer to thee was given,
Itself a messenger from heaven.
Whom God rejects, they are not so;
Strong bands are round them in their woe ;
Their hearts are bound with bands of brass,
That sigh or crying cannot pass.
All treasures did the Lord impart
To Pharaoh, save a contrite heart :
All other gifts unto his foes
He freely gives, nor grudging knows ;
But love's sweet smart and costly pain
A treasure for his friends remain.'

THE MONK AND SINNER.

IN days of old, when holy prophets trod
This earth, the living oracles of God,
What time one such his mission did fulfil,
There lived a youth, a prodigy of ill :
So foul the tablets of his heart and black,
That Satan's self from them had started back ;
Him as the plague sought every soul to shun,
At him in horror pointed every one.
And in the city where this sinful youth
All bosoms filled with horror or with ruth,
In the same city dwelt a Monk as well,
Round whom all crowded when he left his cell :
And those who only touched his garment's hem,
Counted that heaven was nearer unto them—
Such name for prayer and penance he had gained :
And he one day that Prophet entertained :
When in their sight this sinner did appear,
Who yet for awe presumed not to draw near,
But falling back, like moth from dazzling light,
Lay on the ground, as blinded by their sight.
And as in spring relents the frozen ground,
Even so it seemed as though his heart unbound ;
Streamed from his eyes like loosened floods the tears :
'Woe's me,' he cried ; 'for thirty guilty years
My life's best treasure have I spent in vain,
And death and hell are now my only gain.
I totter on a dark chasm's dreadful brink,
Hell's jaws are yawning for me, and I sink :
Yet since none ever Thou didst from Thee cast,
I stretch my hands to Thee ; Lord, hold them fast.'

But here the Monk with lifted eyebrows—'Peace,
Blasphemer,—from thy useless clamours cease :

And darest thou, thus steeped in sin, make free
With him, God's holy Prophet, and with me?
My God, this one thing grant me, that I may
Stand far from this man on the judgment day.'—
More he had said, but on the Prophet broke
Swift inspiration, and he straightway spoke :
'Two here have prayed—diverse has been their prayer,
Yet granted both their supplications are.
He who in mire of sin now thirty years
Has rolled, forgiveness asks with many tears :
Ne'er yet has head of contrite sinner lain
Upon the threshold of God's throne in vain.
All he has sinned to him shall be forgiven ;
Him God has chosen a denizen of heaven.
That Monk has prayed upon the other hand
That he may never near this sinner stand ;
That this may be so, hell his place must be,
Where never more this sinner he shall see.
Whose robe is white, but heart is black with pride,
He for himself hell's gates has opened wide,
For, weighed in God the all-sufficient's scale,
Not claims nor righteousness of man avail ;
But these are costly in his sight indeed,—
Repentance, contrite shame, and sense of need.'

WHAT, thou askest, is the heaven, and the round earth and the sea,
And their dwellers, men and angels,—if with God compared they be?

Heaven and earth, and men and angels, all that anywhere is named,
Matched with Him, lose name and being, and to nothing shrink ashamed.

So 'tis seen when this world's Sultan in his glory forth doth ride,
Highest, lowest, beggars, Emirs, all alike their faces hide.

Its unnumbered billows rolling, great to thee the Ocean seems;
Great the Sun, from golden fountains pouring out a flood of beams:

Yet the faithful, God-enlightened, know another wonderland,
Where the Ocean is a dew-drop, and the Sun a grain of sand.

In the forest's dark recesses hast thou marked the glow-worm's light,
In a green dell unbeholden, twinkling through the storm and night?

Once a pilgrim said—'O gentle star, that shinest nightly, say,
Wherefore thou appearest never in the bright and glorious day?'

Hear what then the gentle glow-worm answered from its mouth of fire,—
In the gloomy forest shine I, but before the sun expire.

THE CERTAINTIES OF FAITH.

SOME children, of their lessons grown quite tired,
As well might be, a holiday desired.
'Were but the master sometimes ill,' they say,
'We might perchance obtain such holiday ;
But he is sturdier than a rock, and so
Our lessons never interruption know.
Oh, if we only could devise some trick,
By which we might persuade him he was sick !'
A roguish urchin then stood up and said,
'Hear a device which comes into my head.
When school-time comes to-morrow, I will say,—
"What is it, master ? are you well to-day ?"
Then you, my brother, entering presently,
"Oh, master, what has happened to you ?" cry.
Then all exclaim, "The master what can ail ?
He looks so flushed, then presently so pale."
You'll see a man will credit any stuff,
If only it is told him oft enough.'
The next day so they did ; the first went in,
And did with serious face the game begin.
'Dear master, you are very ill to-day.'
"Peace, fool," he answered, "I am well, I say."
Yet though the lie had not its end attained,
Some slight misgiving in his soul remained ;
And when the next the same tale did repeat,
'Oh, Sir, you look as in a fever heat,'
And third and fourth chimed in with them, at last
The error in his soul was rooted fast.
Snatching his cloak, he hurried home in fear ;
"To-day at home your lessons I will hear."
Entering his house he chid his wife, and said
She cared not if he were alive or dead.

Wrapt in a blanket on the bed he sate,
And crying oh ! and ah ! bemoaned his fate :
While the sad urchins, listening to his sighs,
With all his pains appeared to sympathize.
Yet since from toil they had not yet escaped,
Upon the nonce a new device they shaped :
No sooner one to say his task drew nigh,
And oped his mouth, than all the rest did cry,
'Oh, not so loud ; your shrieking, prithee, cease,
See how you make his fever to increase.'
"In truth, the fever rises higher still,"
The master answered—"I am very ill.
Go, children, go, and leave me here alone."
They make their bows, and in a trice are gone :
Like birds, when one their cage doth open leave,
They darted forth, each laughing in his sleeve.

What thou of God and of thyself dost know,
So know that none can force thee to forego ;
For ah! his knowledge is a worthless art,
Which forming of himself no vital part,
The foremost man he meets with readier skill
In sleight of words, can rob him of at will.
Faith feels not of *her* lore more sure nor less,
If all the world deny it or confess :
Did the whole world exclaim, 'Like Solomon,
Thou sittest high on Wisdom's noblest throne,'
She would not, than before, be surer then,
Nor draw more courage from the assent of men.
Or did the whole world cry, 'O fond and vain !
What idle dream is this which haunts thy brain ?'
To the whole world Faith boldly would reply,
'The whole world can, but I can never, lie.'

THE PANTHEIST;

THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

ONE who in subtle questions took delight,
Came running to my lodging late one night,
And straight began :—'Wilt thou affirm that sin
Had in man's will its root and origin,
When that will did itself from God proceed?
Whate'er then followed, He must have decreed.
If evil, then, be not against God's will,
'Tis wrongly named, it is not truly ill :
Rather the world a chess-board we should name,
And God both sides is playing of the game :
Moses and Pharaoh *seem* opposed, for they
Do thus God's greatness on two sides display ;
They seem opposed, but at the root are one,
And each his part allotted has well done ;
And that which men so blindly evil call,
And hate and fear, this evil, after all,
Is but as those discordant notes whereby
Well-skilled musicians heighten melody ;—
But as the dark ground cunning painters lay,
To bring the bright hues into clearer day :
'Tis good as yet imperfect, incomplete ;
Fruit that is sour, while passing on to sweet.'

Then I, who knew the world had travelled o'er
This line of thought a thousand times before,
Would all debate have willingly put by,
Yet with this tale at last must make reply :

'The head of Seid his comrade struck one day ;
Seid meant the blow in earnest to repay ;
But then the striker—"Pardon, friend, the blow—
I am inquiring, and two things would know :
See, when my hand did on your head alight,
Straight various bruises there appeared in sight.
Now, prithee, give me a reply to this,
If head or hand their ultimate cause is?
And if you really do with them agree
Who but in pain a lesser pleasure see?"
Seid then—"O fool! my agony is great,
And think'st thou I can idly speculate?"
The same I say ;—let him display his skill
On the world's woe, who does not feel its ill ;
Let speculate the man who feels no pain,
To whom the world is all a pageant vain,
An empty show stretched out that he may sit,
And crying "Fie" or "Bravo!" show his wit.
Me the deep feeling of its mighty woe
Robs of all wish herein my skill to show ;
I only know that evil is no dream,
A thing that is, and does not merely seem :
Nor ask I now who open left the well,
Whereinto, walking carelessly, I fell ;
Not how I stumbled in the pit, but how
Best to emerge, is all my question now.'

THE RIGHTEOUS OF THE WORLD.

THE Rabbis, who devise strange dooms of wrath and ill,
For such as knew not here God's perfect law and will,
Yet these have told how they, as many as with true
And faithful heart fulfilled and loved the good they knew,
The Righteous of the world, shall once delivered be
From darkness, and brought in God's countenance to see:
Which thing they thus recount :— It shall befall one day
In those eternal courts where it is day alway,
Before Him will the Just sit ranged in order meet,
The holy Angels all will stand upon their feet ;
And while they hymn the praise, the glory and the worth
Of Him who by a word created heaven and earth,
Will ever high and higher be borne and swept along
Heaven's azure-vaulted roofs the full concent of song :
Then will that mighty voice of jubilee be heard,
Until from end to end the spacious world is stirred,
Until even those that lie excluded from his face,
The Righteous of the world, who knew not of his grace
And law, while living—now will triumph in his name,
And with their loud Amen will join the glad acclaim.
Then He who knoweth all, yet purposing to show
His goodness, will demand from whence these voices grow.
The ministering angels then will answer and will say,
The while they veil for awe their faces—'These are they,
Who did not know thy law while living, and for this
They lie in hell remote from glory and from bliss ;
They cry Amen from thence.'—But He will of his grace
Compassion take on them and on their mournful case,
Will give the golden key from heaven's crystal floors,
Which opens with a touch hell's forty thousand doors,

And Michael, mighty prince, will fly with it amain,
On mercy's errand swift, and all the angelic train.
Hell's forty thousand gates will open at his word,
Its narrow chambers deep with expectation stirred.
And as a man draws up his neighbour from a pit,
When he shall have therein through evil hap alit,
The prisoners he will draw from dungeons where they lay,
And extricating lift from the deep and miry clay,—
Will wash and cleanse their wounds where they have plaguëd been,
And clothe in garments white, and beautiful and clean ;
And taking by the hand, will lead them to the gate
Of Paradise, where they must for a moment wait ;
Till there with leave brought in, they fall upon their face,
And worship God, and praise and magnify his grace :
While all that had before their places round the throne,
Will give new thanks for this new mercy He has shown,
And by new voices swelled, and higher and more strong,
Ring through the vaults of heaven the full concent of song.

PRAYER.

WHEN prayer delights thee least, then learn to say,
Soul, now is greatest need that thou should'st pray.

Crookëd and warped I am, and I would fain
Straighten myself by thy right line again.

Oh come, warm sun, and ripen my late fruits ;
Pierce, genial showers, down to my parchëd roots.

My well is bitter ; cast therein the tree,
That sweet henceforth its brackish waves may be.

Say what is prayer, when it is prayer indeed ?
The mighty utterance of a mighty need.

The man is praying, who doth press with might
Out of his darkness into God's own light.

White heat the iron in the furnace won ;
Withdrawn from thence, 'tis cold and hard anon.

Flowers from their stalks divided, presently
Droop, fail, and wither in the gazer's eye.

The greenest leaf divided from its stem
To speedy withering doth itself condemn.

The largest river from its fountain head
Cut off, leaves soon a parched and dusty bed.

All things that live from God their sustenance wait,
And sun and moon are beggars at his gate.

All skirts extended of thy mantle hold,
When angel-hands from heaven are scattering gold.

THE FALCON'S REWARD.

BENEATH the fiery cope of middle day
The youthful Prince, his train left all behind,
With eager eye gazed round him every way,
If springing well he anywhere might find.

His favourite falcon, from long aëry flight
Returning, and from quarry struck at last,
Told of the chase, which with its keen delight
Had thus allured him on so far and fast,—

Till gladly he had welcomed in his drought
The dullest pool that gathered in the rain :
But such, or fount of clearer lymph, he sought
Long through that blasted barren waste in vain.

What pleasure when, slow stealing o'er a rock,
He spied the glittering of a little rill,
Which yet, as if his burning thirst to mock,
Did its scant treasures drop by drop distil.

A golden goblet from his saddle-bow
He loosed, and from his steed alighted down,
To wait until that fountain, trickling slow,
Should in the end his golden goblet crown.

When set beside the promise of that draught
How poor had seemed to him the costliest wine,
That with its beaded bubbles winked and laughed,—
When set beside that nectar more divine.

The brimming vessel to his lips at last
He raised,—when, lo ! the falcon on his hand,
With beak and pinion's sudden impulse, cast
That cup's rare treasure all upon the sand.

Long was it ere the fountain, pulsing slow,
Caused once again that chalice to run o'er ;
When thinking no like hindrance now to know,
He raised it to his parchëd lips once more :

Once more, as if to cross his purpose bent,
The watchful bird,—as if on this one thing,
That drink he should not of that stream, intent,—
Struck from his hand the cup with forceful wing.

But when this new defeat his purpose found,
Swift penalty this time the bird must pay ;
Hurled down with angry strength upon the ground,
Before her master's feet in death she lay :

And he, twice baffled, did meanwhile again
From that scant rill to slake his thirst prepare ;
When, down the crags descending, of his train
One cried, 'O monarch, for thy life forbear !

'Coiled in these waters at their fountain head,
And causing them so feebly to distil,
A poisonous snake of hugest growth lies dead,
And doth with venom all the streamlet fill.'

Dropped from his hand the cup ;—one look he cast
Upon the faithful creature at his feet ;
Whose dying struggles now were almost past,
For whom a better guerdon had been meet ;

Then homeward rode in silence many a mile :—
  But if such thoughts did in his bosom grow,
As did in mine the painfulness beguile
  Of that his falcon's end, what man can know?

I said—'Such chalices the world fills up
  For us, and bright and without bale they seem—
A sparkling potion in a jewelled cup,
  Nor know we drawn from what infected stream.

'Our spirit's thirst they promise to assuage,
  And we those cups unto our death had quaffed,
If Heaven did not in dearest love engage
  To dash the chalice down, and mar the draught.

'Alas for us, if we that love are fain
  With wrath and blind impatience to repay,
Which nothing but our weakness doth restrain,—
  As he repaid his faithful bird that day ;

'If an indignant glance we lift above,
  To lose some sparkling goblet discontent,
Which, but for that keen watchfulness of love,
  Swift circling poison through our veins had sent.'

THE CONVERSION OF ABRAHAM.

FOND heart, when learnest thou to say,
I love not pomps that fade away,
Nor glories that decay and wane,
Nor lights that rise to set again?
When wilt thou turn where Abraham turned,
And learn the lesson Abraham learned?
Beyond the river while he dwelt,
He with his kin to idols knelt,
And nightly gazing on the sky,
Worshipped the starry host on high.
But when he saw their splendours fail,
And that bright multitude grow pale,
He left them, and adored the moon;
But she too wanly wanëd soon.
Baffled, he knelt unto the sun;
But when *his* race of light was done,
He cried, 'To such no vows I bring,
I worship not the perishing!'
And turned him to the God whose hand
Made sun, and moon, and starry band—
An everlasting Light, in whom
Decrease and shadow find no room.

THE TRUE PILGRIM.

'MY son,'—'twas thus upon his dying bed
To his sole heir the agëd monarch said,—
'He who on every Moslem did impose,
That once at least before his life should close,
To Mecca he should wend his faithful way,
And in the mother city kneel and pray,
By shadows such as these did understand
The earnest seeking of a better land,
And a more real pilgrimage intend—
Even that which draws for me unto its end.
When thou then on this errand just art bent,
Let not thy labour all be vainly spent,
As vain the toil of many will be found,
Though duly they have paced the holy ground,
Circling the sacred shrine in many a ring,
And duly drank of Zemsem's holy spring,
And kissed that stone, which, white in heaven as snow,
Doth now coal-black through breath of sinners show;
And all the weary desert way have made,
Pacing a-foot, in meanest garb arrayed,
Leaving no tittle unfulfilled of all
Which to a perfect pilgrim should befall.
Oh, many will have known the toil, the pain,
Who yet will miss that journey's truest gain;
For 'tis not merely that thou turn thy face
Towärd the Caaba and the holy place,
Unless as well thou dost in spirit fare
Towärd New Zion, and art journeying there.
Vainly whole heaps of pebbles wilt thou bring,
And at a fancied aëry devil fling,
Casting thy stone upon the very field,
Where Abraham's faith the tempter once repelled,

If all the while thou shunnest to molest
A truer devil, lurking in thy breast.
And what will profit to have laid aside
Thy gorgeous robes and outward signs of pride,
Taking in mean attire thy pilgrim way,
If pride be still thine inmost soul's array?
Oh! let humility thy garment be,
Which never suffer to be drawn from thee,
Although a Chosroes' mantle in its stead
By Fortune's hand to thee were offerëd.
Thou ridest; yet remember not the less
That many pace a-foot the wilderness:
Fare gently for their sakes; or if perchance,
Vigorous and strong, on foot thou dost advance,
Bethink thee still that with the caravan
Is many a child, and many an aged man.

'O pilgrim, to the holy city bound,
Learn other dangers on thy pathway found.
To right or left if sounds thine ear invade,
Like tramplings of a mighty cavalcade,
Or voice by night which names thee by thy name,
As though from some familiar friend it came,
Bidding thee turn a little from thy way,
Or tarry, do not for thy life obey;
But close thine ears, and ever onward haste,
Eluding so the demons of the waste.
Or if in fiery noon, when throat is dry,
And limbs are faint, far off thou dost espy
What seems to thee some broad transparent lake,
Delighting in its lucid breast to take
White clouds, far mountains, and inverted trees,
Do not forsake thy company for these:
'Tis but the floating heat of middle noon,
From sand-flats drawn, and which will vanish soon:

Oh woe ! if thee it shall have lured away,
To flatter first, and afterwards betray.
My son, whom I can watch for now no more,
Grave deeply in thine heart this pilgrim lore ;
About thy neck a father's precepts bind ;
On, on, and leave these perils far behind.'

AN EASTERN VERSION OF THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

THERE went a man from home : and to his neighbours twain
He gave, to keep for him, two sacks of golden grain.
Deep in his cellar one the precious charge concealed ;
And forth the other went and strewed it in his field.
The man returns at last—asks of the first his sack :
'Here, take it ; 'tis the same ; thou hast it safely back.'
Unharmed it shows without, but when he would explore
His sack's recesses, corn there finds he now no more
One half of all therein proves rotten and decayed,
Upon the other half have worm and mildew preyed.
The putrid heap to him in ire he doth return ;
And of the other asks, 'Where is my sack of corn?'
Who answered, 'Come with me, behold how it has sped,'
And took and showed him fields with waving harvests spread.
Then cheerfully the man laughed out and cried, 'This one
Had insight, to make up for the other that had none ·
The letter *he* observed, but thou the precept's sense
And thus to thee and me shall profit grow from hence.
In harvest thou shalt fill two sacks of corn for me,
The residue of right remains in full for thee.'

THE VASE OF HONEY.

FAIR vessel hast thou seen with honey filled,
Which is no sooner opened, than descend
Upon the clammy sweets by bees distilled
A troop of flies, quick swarming without end?

Yet these when one doth fan away and beat,
Such as had lighted with a fearful care
On the jar's edge, nor cumbered wings and feet,
Lightly they mount into the upper air.

But all that headlong plunged those sweets among,
They cannot fly, in cloying sweetness bound;
The heavy toils have all around them clung,
In woful surfeitings their lives are drowned.

Such vessel is this world—fanned evermore
By death's dark Angel with his mighty wing;
Then all that had in pleasure's honied store
Their spirits sunk, they upward cannot spring.

Only they mount, who on this vessel's side
With heed alighting, had with extreme lip
Just ventured, there while suffered to abide,
Its sweets in measure and with fear to sip.

EASTERN MORALITIES.

'WHO truly strives?' they asked. Then one replied :
'The man that owns no other goal beside
The throne of God, and till he there arrives,
Allows himself no rest, he truly strives.'

Honour each thing for that it once may be,
In bud the rose, in egg the eagle see ;
Bright butterfly behold in ugly worm,
Nor doubt that man enfolds an angel form.

My friends exclaimed, who saw me bowed with woe :
'Be of good cheer ; the world is ebb and flow.'
'To the dead fish what helps it,' I replied,
'That back returns the free and flowing tide?'

A pebble, thrown into the mighty sea,
Sinks, and disturbs not its tranquillity :
No ocean, but a shallow pool, the man,
Whom every little wrong disquiet can.

A monk that once did at a king's board feed,
Ate less than was his wont and was his need :
And the meal done, when he a grace should say,
Prayed more and longer than he used to pray.
O friend, if great things may in small be found,
Quite other road than heavenward thou art bound.

He is a friend, who treated as a foe,
Now even more friendly than before doth show ;

Who to his brother still remains a shield,
Although a sword for him his brother wield;
Who of the very stones against him cast
Builds friendship's altar higher and more fast.

With needle's point more easily you will
Uproot and quite unfasten a huge hill,
Than from the bosom you will dig up pride;
And the ant's footfall sooner is descried,
On black earth moving, in the blackest night,
Than are pride's subtle movements brought to light.

When men exalt thee with their flatteries,
Occasion take thine own self to despise;
And as a help to this, the meanest thing
Which thou hast ever done to memory bring.
Think, too, that now thou dost in peril fall
Of doing a yet meaner thing than all,
If, being what thou art in thine own sight,
Thou dost this praise appropriate as thy right.

The business of the world is child's play mere;
Too many, ah! the children playing here:
Their pleasure and their woe, their loss and gain,
Alike mean nothing, and alike are vain—
As children's, who, to pass the time away,
Build up their booths, and buy and sell in play;
But homeward hungering must at eve repair,
And standing leave their booths with all their ware:
So the world's children, when their night is come,
With empty satchels turn them sadly home.

Renounce the world, that thou its lord may'st be;
Become a servant, to be truly free.
O arrow, yield thee to thy Monarch's bow,
That whither He would send thee thou may'st go.

O camel, kneel, and freely take thy load ;
And freely bear it, needing not the goad.
For thy Belovëd be a light-toned flute,
That to his slightest breath is never mute.
In the mine hide not, when God seeks for thee,
Rude ore, that stamped, his money thou may'st be.

Sage, who would'st maker of thine own god be,
When made, alas ! what will he profit thee ?
Most like art thou to children, that astride
On reeds or wooden horses proudly ride ;
And as they trail them on the ground, they cry,
'This is the lightning, and its Lord am I !'
Yet, while they deem their horses them upbear,
Themselves the bearers of their horses are ;
And when they grow aweary of their course,
They find no strength in these, no help, no force.
How otherwise they fare, how fresh, how strong,
Not of themselves, but borne of God along !
How jubilant to Him they lift their head,
Till the ninth heaven shakes underneath their tread !

True knowledge is the waking up of powers
To conscious life, which were already ours.
What now is mine in leaf and flower and fruit,
That I possessed before in bud and root.
The faded writing of the mind again
By chymic art comes forth distinct and plain.
Springs that were stopt, when that is cleared away
That choked them, bubble in the open day.
The stars appear at eve ; which yet have been
All day in heaven, although till now unseen.
The dawn lights up the landscape ; the great sun
Shows, but not makes, the world he looks upon.
I found a rich pearl flung upon my coast,
Which yet no other but myself had lost.

I entered a large hall ; no foreign dome,
But even my own long-left forgotten home ;
And in what seemed at first a stranger face
A former friend I daily learn to trace.

Who that might watch the moon in heaven, would look
At her weak image in the water-brook ?
Who were content, that might in presence stand
Of one beloved, with letters from his hand ?
When thou hast learned the name, hast thou the thing ?
What life to thee will definitions bring ?
Will the four letters, R, O, S, and E,
The rose's hues and fragrance bring to thee ?
Feed not on husks, but these strip off, and feed
On the rich kernel, which is food indeed.
Say, who of choice would wash in arid sand,
While limpid streams were bubbling close at hand ?
Bare Science is dry sand ;—thy spirit's wings
Bathe thou in Love's delicious water-springs.
Be thou the bee, which ever to its cell
Not wax alone, but honey brings as well :
Good is the wax for light, but better still
What will thine hive with storëd sweetness fill.

His splendid pilgrimage to Mecca done,
Within the temple great Almansur's son
Showered with a bounty prodigal and proud
Enormous gifts among the struggling crowd ;
And every day those gifts he multiplied,
Vexed every day and humbled in his pride,
That one who seemed the poorest pilgrim there,
Remained aloof with calm abstracted air
Indifferent, and contended not nor prest,
To share his lavish largess with the rest.
Until at last, when he had shed in vain
Gold, jewels, pearls, he could no more refrain,

But cried to him, 'And dost thou nought desire,
And wilt thou nothing at my hands require?'
Who answered, standing where before he stood:
'Great shame it were for me, if any good,
While thus a suppliant in God's house I stand,
I asked or looked for, saving at his hand.'

Man, the caged bird that owned a higher nest,
Is here awhile detained, reluctant guest;
Plumage and beak he shatters in his rage,
And with his prison doth vain war engage;
For him the falcon watches, and his snare
The bloody fowler doth for him prepare.
Exiled from home, he here must sadly sing,
In spring lack autumn, and in autumn spring.
Far from his nest, he shivers on a wall,
Where blows on him of rude misfortune fall—
His head with weight of misery sore bowed down,
His pinion clogged with dust, his courage gone.
Then from his nest in heaven is heard a cry,
And straight he spreads his wings divine on high:
Lift him, O Lord, unto the lotus-tree,
No meaner pitch may with his birth agree;
Grant him a pinion of such lofty flight,
That he may on the lotus-tree alight:
In thy bright palaces his nest prepare;
O happy, happy bird that nesteth there!

Sate in his presence-chamber Solomon;
When thither of his princes entered one,
Haste in his step. and terror in his eye,
And cried, 'O King, defend me, or I die;
Even now I saw with visage dark and fell
Gaze on me the Death-angel Azraël.'
To him the King: 'What help may I afford?'
'Oh bid the storm-wind, gracious mighty lord,

That it to farthest India waft me straight ;
And there my life shall reach a longer date.'
To farthest Ind at Solomon's command
The storm-wind swept him over sea and land.
But when the Spirits met another day,
To the Death-angel spake the Monarch : 'Say,
Why did thy terrors that poor man affright,
Till he for anguish well nigh died outright,
That poor man, whom I sheltered with my might?'
Then he : 'I meant not dreadful to appear,
But only wondered to behold him here ;
For God had bid me on that very day
From farthest Ind to fetch his soul away.
I thought, Were thousand pinions given to thee,
To-day in India thou shouldst never be ;
Nor guessed how this should be fulfilled, till there
Thy word did waft him, answering to his prayer.'

A hen, though such tame creatures mostly are,
Yet once received a water-bird in care ;
Its mother-instinct drew the fledgling still
To the wide ocean-floods, to roam at will ;
Its timid nurse, upon the other hand,
Sought evermore to lead it back to land.
O man ! thy mother, Heaven, thy nurse is Earth,
And thou of both wert nurtured from thy birth ;
From thy true mother comes thine impulse free
To launch forth boldly upon being's sea ;
While aye thy nurse fears for thee, and would fain
Thee to a narrow strip of dry restrain.
Up, and remember Adam's kingly worth,
How angels danced before him at his birth,
How unto him they rendered homage all,
And served him at the glorious festival,
The bridal of two worlds, that kissed and met
The morn when he in Paradise was set.

Up, man, for what if thou with beasts hast part,
Since in the body framed of dust thou art,
Yet know thyself upon the other side
Greater than angels, and to God allied.
But ah! I sound this high alarum in vain,
Sunk on thy bosom doth thy head remain :
In lists of love while noblest bosoms bleed,
That flies not vex thee, this is all thine heed.
Up, be a man at last ; with Abraham go
From house and kindred forth, thy God to know :
Fair shine the sun and moon and host of heaven,
To eye of sense no fairer sight is given :
Yet cry with him : 'These rise to set again ;
I worship Him, a light that will not wane.'
Into the wilderness with Moses hie,
And hear that mighty word, 'The Lord am I.'
Then hast thou won the place that is thine own,
A sitter on the threshold of God's throne.

POEMS WRITTEN DURING THE RUSSIAN WAR, 1854, 1855.

WHAT though yet the spirit slumbers
That should clothe great acts in song,
Stirring but in feeble numbers,
Loosening but a stammering tongue ;

Still, as well my soul presages,
Mightier voices soon will sound,
Which shall ring through all the ages,
While the nations listen round.

For even now the thoughts are waking,
And the deeds are being done,
Deeds and thoughts, the poet's making,
Whence his solemn heart is won.

If Thermopylæ's three hundred,
They who kept the pass so well,—
If at them all time has wondered,
As they fought, and as they fell,

With their deed of duty cast they
Our six hundred in the shade,
When at that same bidding passed they
To their closing death-parade?

Let them their due praise inherit,
Those of weaker woman-kind,
Who in times past owned a spirit,
Which has left man's strength behind ;

Yet our hearts and hearts' devotion
Wait upon that noble train,
Who have crossed the distant ocean
For a fellowship with pain ;

Seeking, as men seek for riches,
Painful vigils by the bed
Where the maimed and dying stretches
Aching limbs beside the dead :

And for this great suffering nation
Sealed those fountains shall not prove,
Those old springs of inspiration,
Mighty death, and mightier love.

But meanwhile, the pauses filling,
Till that deeper soul be stirred,
Mother-land, thou wilt be willing
That some fainter notes be heard.

What if thou in bitter mourning
Dost beside the graves recline
Of thy lost and unreturning,
Yet no Rachel's grief is thine.

Stately grief, not wild and tameless,
Thine, the privileged to see
Gentle, simple, named and nameless,
Willing all to die for thee ;

Foremost names in thine old story,
Foremost in these death-rolls shown,
Heirs no more of others' glory,
But the makers of their own.

Thy great mother-heart is bleeding,
Torn and piercëd through and through,
Post on heavy post succeeding,
Bearing each some anguish new.

Yet the right thy bosom strengthens,
Nought in thee of courage dies,
Though the long sad death-roll lengthens,
Ever lengthens in thine eyes.

These are gone ; thou nursest others
Of the same heroic breed,
Good as they, their spirits' brothers,
To their hazards to succeed.

Then, while this thy grief's proud fashion,
From all weakness far removed,
This thy steadfast solemn passion
By the graves of thy beloved,

Thou wilt let him pass unchidden,
Wilt perchance vouchsafe an ear,
Who too weakly and unbidden
Dares to sound their praises here ;

This slight tribute of his bringing
Thou wilt not in scorn put by ;
And wilt pardon one for singing,
While so many do and die.

ALMA.

THOUGH till now ungraced in story, scant although thy waters be,
Alma, roll those waters proudly, proudly roll them to the sea.

Yesterday unnamed, unhonoured, but to wandering Tartar known,
Now thou art a voice for ever, to the world's four corners blown.

In two nations' annals graven, thou art now a deathless name,
And a star for ever shining in their firmament of fame.

Many a great and ancient river, crowned with city, tower, and shrine,
Little streamlet, knows no magic, boasts no potency like thine;

Cannot shed the light thou sheddest around many a living head,
Cannot lend the light thou lendest to the memories of the dead.

Yea, nor all unsoothed their sorrow, who can, proudly mourning, say—
When the first strong burst of anguish shall have wept itself away—

'He has past from us, the loved one; but he sleeps with them that died
By the Alma, at the winning of that terrible hillside.'

Yes, and in the days far onward, when we all are calm as those,
Who beneath thy vines and willows on their hero-beds repose,

Thou on England's banners blazoned with the famous fields of old,
Shalt, where other fields are winning, wave above the brave and bold :

And our sons unborn shall nerve them for some great deed to be done,
By that twentieth of September, when the Alma's heights were won.

O thou river ! dear for ever to the gallant, to the free,
Alma, roll thy waters proudly, proudly roll them to the sea.

SONNET.

TOGETHER lay them in one common grave,
These noble sons of England and of France,
Who side by side did yesterday advance,
And to their foes a dear example gave
Of what a freeman's worth beyond a slave.
Theirs was a noble fellowship in life,
They breathed their lives out in one glorious strife ;
Then let them lie, the brave beside the brave.
And sleep with them, for evermore to cease,
Sleep with the sleep which no awaking knows,
The long contention of eight hundred years :
While from their ashes the fair tree of peace
Springs, under which two nations may repose
In love which ancient discord more endears.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

WE crowned the hard-won heights at length,
Baptized in flame and fire ;
We saw the foeman's sullen strength,
That grimly made retire ;

Saw close at hand, and then more far,
Beneath the battle smoke
The ridges of his shattered war,
That broke and ever broke.

But one, an English household's pride,
Dear many ways to me,
Who climbed that death-path by my side,
I sought, but could not see—

Last seen, what time our foremost rank
That iron tempest tore ;
He touched, he scaled the rampart bank,
Seen then, and seen no more.

One friend to aid, I measured back
With him that pathway dread ;
No fear to wander from our track,
Its waymarks English dead.

Light thickened ; but our search was crowned,
As we too well divined ;
And after briefest quest we found
What we most feared to find.

His bosom with one death-shot riven,
The warrior boy lay low ;
His face was turned unto the heaven,
His feet unto the foe.

As he had fall'n upon the plain,
Inviolate he lay ;
No ruffian spoiler's hand profane
Had touched that noble clay.

And precious things he still retained,
Which by one distant hearth,
Loved tokens of the loved, had gained
A worth beyond all worth.

I treasured these for them who yet
Knew not their mighty woe ;
I softly sealed his eyes, and set
One kiss upon his brow.

A decent grave we scooped him, where
Less thickly lay the dead,
And decently composed him there
Within that narrow bed.

Oh theme for manhood's bitter tears,
The beauty and the bloom
Of less than twenty summer years
Shut in that darksome tomb !

Of soldier sire the soldier son—
Life's honoured eventide
One lives to close in England, one
In maiden battle died ;

And they that should have been the mourned,
The mourners' parts obtain :
Such thoughts were ours, as we returned
To earth its earth again.

Brief words we read of faith and prayer
Beside that hasty grave ;
Then turned away, and left him there,
The gentle and the brave ;

I calling back with thankful heart,
With thoughts to peace allied,
Hours when we two had knelt apart
Upon the lone hill-side :

And, comforted, I praised the grace,
Which him had led to be
An early seeker of that Face,
Which he should early see.

SONNET.

FROM what of passion and of earthly pride,
Presumptuous confidence and glory vain,
Will cleave to justest cause which men sustain,
Till Thou their cause and them hast purified,
From what too much of these Thou hast espied
In us, oh ! cleanse us from this dangerous leaven,
At any cost, oh ! purge us, righteous Heaven,
Though we herein be sorely searched and tried.
So, purified from these, may we fulfil,
Upon thy strength relying, not our own,
The dreadful sentence of thy righteous will ;
And this by us unto the nations shown,
May burn no incense to our drag, but still
All honour give to Thee, and Thee alone.

BALAKLAVA.

MANY a deed of faithful daring may obtain no record here,
Wrought where none could see or note it, save the one Almighty Seer.

Many a deed, awhile remembered, out of memory needs must fall,
Covered, as the years roll onward, by oblivion's creeping pall :

But there are which never, never, to oblivion can give room,
Till in flame earth's records perish, till the thunderpeal of doom :

And of these through all the ages married to immortal fame,
One is linked, and linked for ever, Balaklava, with thy name ;

With thine armies three that wond'ring stood at gaze and held their breath,
With thy fatal lists of honour, and thy tournament of death.

O our brothers that are sleeping, weary with your great day's strife,
On that bleak Crimean headland, noble prodigals of life,

Eyes which ne'er beheld you living, these have dearly mourned you dead,
All your squandered wealth of valour, all the lavish blood ye shed.

And in our eyes tears are springing ; but we bid them back again ;
None shall say, to see us weeping, that we hold your offering vain ;

That for nothing, in our sentence, did that holocaust arise,
With a battle-field for altar, and with you for sacrifice.

Not for nought ; to more than warriors armed as you for mortal fray,
Unto each that in life's battle waits his Captain's word ye say—

'What by duty's voice is bidden, there where duty's star may guide,
Thither follow, that accomplish, whatsoever else betide.'

This ye taught ; and this your lesson solemnly in blood ye sealed :
Heroes, martyrs, are the harvest Balaklava's heights shall yield.

YES, let us own it in confession free,
That when we girt ourselves to quell the wrong,
We deemed it not so giant-like and strong,
But it with our slight effort thought to see
Pushed from its base ; yea, almost deemed that we,
Champions of right, might be excused the price
Of pain, and loss, and large self-sacrifice,
Set ever on high things by Heav'n's decree.
What if this work's great hardness was concealed
From us, until so far upon our way
That no escape remained us, no retreat,—
Lest, being at an earlier hour revealed,
We might have shrunk too weakly from the heat,
And shunned the burden of this fiery day?

Ἢ TAN, Ἢ ἘΠΙ TAN.

'*THIS, or on this*;—Bring home with thee this shield,
Or be thou, dead, upon this shield brought home'—
So spake the Spartan mother to her son
Whom her own hands had armed. Oh strong of heart!
And famed through all the ages for that word!
Yet know I of a fairer strength than hers—
Strength linked with weakness, steeped in tears and fears,
And tenderness of trembling womanhood;
But true as hers to duty's perfect law.

And such is theirs, who in our England now,
Wives, sisters, mothers, watch by day, by night,
In many a cottage, many a stately hall,
For those dread posts, ,too slow too swift, that haste
O'er land and sea, the messengers of doom;
Theirs, who ten thousand times would rather hear
Of loved forms stretched upon the bloody sod,
All cold and stark, but with the debt they owed
To that dear land that bore them duly paid,
Than look to enfold them in strict arms again,
By aught in honour's or in peril's path
Unduly shunned, for that embrace reserved.

INKERMAN.

SUNDAY, NOV. 5, 1854.

CHEERLY with us that dread November morn
Rose, as I trace its features in my mind ;
A day that in the lap of winter born,
Yet told of autumn scarcely left behind.

And we by many a hearth in all the land,
Whom quiet sleep had lapped the calm night. through,
Changed greetings, lip with lip, and hand to hand,
Old greetings, but which love makes ever new.

Then, as the day brought with it sweet release
From this world's care, with timely feet we trod
The customary paths of blessed peace ;
We worshipped in the temples of our God ;

And when the sun had travelled his brief arc,
Drew round our hearths again in thankful ease :
With pleasant light we chased away the dark,
We sat at eve with children round our knees.

So fared this day with us :—but how with you?
What, gallant hosts of England, was your cheer,
Who numbered hearts as gentle and as true
As any kneeling at our altars here?

From cheerless watches on the cold dank ground
Startled, ye felt a foe on every side ;
With mist and gloom and deaths encompassed round,
With even to perish in the light denied.

And that same season of our genial ease,
It was your very agony of strife ;
While each of those our golden moments sees
With you the ebbing of some noble life.

'Mid dark ravines, by precipices vast,
Did there and here your dreadful conflict sway :
No Sabbath day's light work to quell at last
The fearful odds of that unequal fray.

Oh 'hope' of England, only not 'forlorn,'
Because ye never your own hope resigned,
But in worst case, beleaguered, overborne,
Did help in God and in your own selves find ;

We greet you o'er the waves, as from this time
Men, to the meanest and the least of whom,
In reverence of fortitude sublime,
We would rise up, and yield respectful room :

We greet you o'er the waves, nor doubt to say,
Our Sabbath setting side by side with yours,
Yours was the better and the nobler day,
And days like it have made that ours endures.

THE UNFORGOTTEN.

WHOM for thy race of heroes wilt thou own,
And, England, who shall be thy joy, thy pride?
As thou art just, oh then not those alone
Who nobly conquering lived, or conquering died.

Them also in thy roll of heroes write,
For well they earned what best thou canst bestow,
Who being girt and armëd for the fight,
Yielded their arms, but to no mortal foe.

Far off they pined on fever-stricken coast,
Or sank in sudden arms of painful death;
And faces which their eyes desired the most,
They saw not, as they drew their parting breath.

Sad doom, to know a mighty work in hand,
Which shall from all the ages honour win;
Upon the threshold of this work to stand,
Arrested there, while others enter in.

And this was theirs; they saw their fellows bound
To fields of fame which they might never share;
And all the while within their own hearts found
A strength that was not less, to do and dare:

But knew that never, never with their peers,
They should salute some grand day's glorious close,
The shout of triumph ringing in their ears,
The light of battle shining on their brows.

Sad doom ;—yet say not Heaven to them assigned
A lot from all of glory quite estranged :
Albeit the laurel which they hoped to bind
About their brows for cypress wreath was changed.

Heaven gave to them a glory stern, austere,
A glory of all earthly glory shorn ;
With firm heart to accept fate's gift severe,
Bravely to bear the thing that must be borne ;

To see such visions fade and turn to nought,
And in this saddest issue to consent ;
If only the great work were duly wrought,
That others should accomplish it, content.

Then as thou wouldst thyself continue great,
Keep a true eye for what is great indeed ;
Nor know it only in its lofty state
And victor's robes, but in its lowliest weed.

And now, and when this dreadful work is done,
England, be these too thy delight and pride ;
Wear them as near thy heart as any one
Of all who conquering lived, or conquering died.

ON THE BREAKING OFF OF THE CONFERENCES AT VIENNA, JUNE, 1855.

HEART of England, faltering never in the good time or the ill,
But thy great day's task of duty strong and patient to fulfil ;

Men of England, constant ever, to your own plain instincts true.
Praise the Giver of all good things for the gift He gave to you ;

Praise the Giver of all good things, praise the Giver of the best,
Of a firm heart firmly beating in a strong resolvëd breast.

Praise Him that, when others faltered, ye continued at one stay,
Praise Him that the hour of weakness has for ever passed away.

To her cancelled scroll of greatness none shall now set England's name ;
What she sowed in tears and anguish she shall never reap in shame.

Lift your heads up, O ye weepers ; from the dust yourselves arouse ;
Chase away the double sadness that was gathering on your brows.

Lift your heads up, O ye weepers ; those that were your
joy and pride,
Those whom you must weep for ever, not for nothing
shall have died.

If the crown of all your gladness has been stricken from
your head,
If, discrowned, ye mourn in ashes for your unreturning
dead,

Not to purchase shameful baffling at a higher dearer rate
Than our fathers purchased honour, were your homes
made desolate.

For oh ! hearken *ye*, and hearken, all who still retain
delight
In the old land's fiery valour, in the victories of right ;

List, oh ! list, what tales of triumph flash the magic wires
along,
Long delayed, now each on other in a swift succession
throng.

First-fruits of a mightier harvest, preludes of a loftier
strain,
Pledges of a part well chosen, stir our hearts again, again ;

Till in his good time He give us, who has proved and
purified,
Who has shamed our shallow boasting, who has tamed
our guilty pride,

Till He give us, when the giving shall not lift us up nor
spoil,
All we sought, the ample guerdon of a nation's tears and
toil.

TO ——

IN huts and palaces are mourners found,
As on the far-off fields of death in turn
Leap the dread lots from fortune's fatal urn :
And those not yet in cords of sorrow bound,
But listening everywhere the doleful sound
Of others' griefs, still ask, Who next shall mourn,
Of brother, son, or dearer yet forlorn?
To whom shall next the cup of pain go round?
We know not ; if anon to thee and me,
Let not our hearts then chide us that we heard
Of pangs, which other souls did search and try,
To this their anguish yielding, it might be,
The trivial offering of a passing sigh,
While all our deeper heart remained unstirred.

THE RETURN OF THE GUARDS.

JULY, 1856.

TWO years—an age of glory and of pain !—
Since we with blessings and with shouts and tears,
And with high hopes pursued your parting train,
With everything but fears.

Forth from beside our hearths we saw you pass,
And guessed that battle must be stern and strong ;
War's shapes we saw,—but dimly, in a glass,—
Its shapes of wrath and wrong.

We saw not, Heaven in mercy did not show,
The fiery squadron rushing to its doom,
An army in its winding-sheet of snow,
Nor Varna's charnel tomb.

We saw not Scutari's heaped up agonies,
Nor those blest hands and hearts that brought relief;
Splendours and glooms were hidden from our eyes,—
What glory and what grief!

One thing we saw, one only thing we knew,
Come what come might, ye would not bring to shame
The loved land which had trusted thus to you
Its wealth of ancient fame.

Therefore the old land greets you, whose renown
In face of friend and foe ye well upbore,
Handing the treasure of its glory down
Not poorer than before.

And greets you first, as owing you the most,
The Lady, whose transcendant diadem,
Unless she ruled brave men, would cease to boast
Its best and fairest gem.

But ah! if through her bosom there is sent,
Nor hers alone, a throb of piercing pain,
With tearful memories of the brave who went,
And come not now again,

Of all who made a holy land for aye,
(Such consecration is in glorious graves),
Of that bleak barren headland far away,
Foamed round by Euxine waves;

Yet shall this sadness presently depart,
Leaving undimmed the splendour of this hour ;
We rather thanking Heaven with grateful heart
For their high gift and dower,

Who, ending well, have passed beyond the range
Of our mutations ; whom no spot or stain
Can now touch ever ; for whom chance and change
Not any more remain.

Shout then, ye people ; let glad thoughts have way ;
Shout, and in these their absent fellows greet,—
Yea, all who shared with them, of that fierce day
The burden and the heat.

Nor yet forget that when in coming time
By many an English hearth shall men recall
This two-years' chronicle of deeds sublime,
Then first, perchance, of all,

They, talking of dread Inkerman, shall tell,
When that wild storm of fight had passed away,
How thick by those low mounds they kept so well
The noble Bearskins lay.

ELEGIAC POEMS.

'Love that hath its deep foundation set
Under the grave of things.'

TO ———

I THOUGHT at first these records should belong
To few save thee ; nor meant that many eyes
Should see unfolded thus without disguise
These mysteries of grief in mournful song ;
Yet might it unto love appear a wrong,
Aught to keep back, that would perchance impart
Some portion to another wounded heart
Of what these lent to thine of comfort strong?
Then let it be,—enduring for their sake,
Hearts which are bleeding now, or once have bled,
And that from hence some solace slight may take,
That others, of such grief untouched, should say
That here what better had been coverëd,
Is bared unto the garish eye of day.

WHAT, many times I musing asked, is man,
If grief and care
Keep far from him? he knows not what he can,
What cannot bear.

He, till the fire hath proved him, doth remain
The main part dross:
To lack the loving discipline of pain
Were endless loss.

Yet when my Lord did ask me on what side
I were content
The grief, whereby I must be purified,
To me were sent,

As each imagined anguish did appear,
Each withering bliss,
Before my soul, I cried, 'Oh! spare me here,
Oh no, not this!—'

Like one that having need of, deep within,
The surgeon's knife,
Would hardly bear that it should graze the skin,
Though for his life.

Till He at last, who best doth understand
Both what we need,
And what can bear, did take my case in hand,
Nor crying heed.

TO M———.

DEAR girl, that clingest to my side
So closely in thy tears,
As overawed and terrified
By some mysterious fears ;

Thine own great loss, thy parents' woe,
Thou dimly dost divine,
And weepest ; yet thou dost not know
What cause to weep is thine.

Sad art thou and disconsolate,
That he is gone away,
The youthful friend, the joyful mate
Of childhood's happy day ;

That he who sported on life's shore,
And culled bright shells with thee
And beauteous plants, will sport no more
By that fair-seeming sea.

But I am shedding other tears
For thee, my gentle child—
Far looking o'er the surge of years
So gloomy, dark, and wild :

Gone is he, who amid that strife
Would with an arm more strong
For thee have cleft the waves of life,
And shielded from its wrong.

That holy thing—a brother's love—
Thine is it still to claim;
Oh! ever be it thine to prove
What means that holy name.

But over him vain watch we keep,
Our first—thine elder—born;
And all of us have cause more deep
Than yet we know, to mourn.

JANUARY 16th, 1841.

NO mother's eye beside thee wakes to-night,
No taper burns beside thy lonely bed;
Darkling thou liest, hidden out of sight,
And none are near thee but the silent dead.

How cheerly glows this hearth, yet glows in vain,
For we uncheered beside it sit alone,
And listen to the wild and beating rain
In angry gusts against our casement blown:

And though we nothing speak, yet well I know
That both our hearts are there, where thou dost keep
Within thy narrow chamber far below,
For the first time unwatched, thy lonely sleep:

Oh no, not thou!—and we our faith deny,
This thought allowing:—thou, removed from harms,
In Abraham's bosom dost securely lie,
Oh! not in Abraham's, in a Saviour's arms—

In that dear Lord's, who in thy worst distress,
  Thy bitterest anguish, gave thee, dearest child,
Still to abide in perfect gentleness,
  And like an angel to be meek and mild.

Sweet corn of wheat, committed to the ground
  To die, and live, and bear more precious ear,
Since in the heart of earth thy Saviour found
  His place of rest, for thee we will not fear.

Sleep softly, till that blessëd rain and dew,
  Down lighting upon earth, such change shall bring,
That all its fields of death shall laugh anew,
  Yea, with a living harvest laugh and sing.

MORAVIAN HYMN.

[SLIGHTLY ALTERED.]

WHERE is this infant? it is gone—
  To whom? to Christ, its Saviour true.
What does He for it? He goes on
  As He has ever done, to do—
He blesses, He embraces without end,
And to all children proves the tenderest friend.

He loves to have the little ones
  Upon His lap quite close and near;
And thus their glass so swiftly runs,
  And they so little while are here;
He gave—He takes them when He thinks it best
For them to come to Him and find their rest.

However 'tis a great delight
  Awhile to see such little princes,
All drest in linen fine and white,
  A beauty which escapes the senses :
The pure Lamb dwells in them—his majesty
Makes their sweet eyes to sparkle gloriously.

Be therefore thanked, Thou dearest Lamb,
  That we this precious child have seen,
And that thy blood and Jesu's name,
  To it a glittering robe have been :
We thank Thee too that Thou hast brought it home,
That it so soon all dangers hath o'ercome.

Dear child, so live thou happily
  In Christ, who was thy faith's beginner,
Rejoice in Him eternally
  With each redeemed and happy sinner ;
We bury thee in hope—the Lamb once slain
Will raise, and we shall see thee yet again.

WHAT was thy life? a pearl cast up awhile
Upon the bank and shoal of time;—again,
Even as it did the gazer's eyes beguile,
Drawn backward by the ever-hungering main.

What was thy life? a fountain of sweet wave,
Which to the salt sea's margin all too near
Rose sparkling, and a few steps scarcely gave,
Ere *that* distained its waters fresh and clear.

What was thy life? a flowering almond-tree,
Which all too soon its blossoms did unfold;
And so must see their lustre presently
Dimmed, and their beauty nipped by envious cold.

What was thy life? a bright and beauteous flame,
Wherein, a season, light and joy we found;
But a swift sound of rushing tempest came,
It passed—and sparkless ashes strewed the ground.

What was thy life? a bird in infant's hand
Held with too slight a grasp, and which, before
He knows or fears, its pinions doth expand,
And with a sudden impulse heavenward soar.

I CANNOT tell what coming years
May have, reserved, of grief for me ;
I cannot tell what they may be,
How wrung with anguish, dimmed with tears :

But scarcely can a sadder morn
Than this upon mine eyelids break,
When from a flattering dream I wake
On a reality forlorn,

For never from thine ivory gate,
O Sleep, a falser dream was sent
Than unto me brief gladness lent,
To leave me sorrow's trustier mate.

We wandered freely as of yore,
And in my hand I felt the grasp
Of that small hand, whose tender clasp
I shall not feel, oh ! any more :

We wandered through the peopled towns,
And where we came I heard men praise
His gracious looks, his winning ways,—
We wandered o'er the lonely downs ;

And ever held familiar talk
As we passed onward, I and he
Who was companion true to me
At home, and in long woodland walk ;

Gone was the agony, the fear,
And all the dreadful gulf between
What we are now and what have been,
The vault, the coffin, and the bier.

I start—and lo ! my dream is not :
But though 'tis round me thickest gloom,
Yet in the corner of the room
I know there stands a vacant cot.

I close mine eyes ; I strive again
To feed upon that poor delight ;
The broken links to re-unite
Once more of slumber's golden chain.

Lost effort !—Sleep, oh ! twice untrue,
What need to bring that fond deceit ?
And then, when I allow the cheat,
To flee, while vainly I pursue ?

THIS chest, a homely cabinet, although
It keeps no jewels won from toilsome mine,
Nor rarest shells from ocean depths below
Drawn with unfaded colours bright and fine,
Nor doth not graven gems, nor vases show,
Nor old medallions of some kingly line—
Albeit no such treasures here there be,
Yet guards it what is dearer far to me.

But wouldst thou know what treasures thus are dear,
And over costliest things in worth prevail,—
Some pebbles quaint, some broken toys appear,
Some feathers from the peacock's starry tail,
Some books, of those that children love, are here,
An earthen lamp whose light has long grown pale,
With gifts a kinsman from the Indian shore
Brought o'er the sea,—these make up all the store.

But when that loved one left us on life's way,
Whose that they were doth make these trifles aught,
Things sacred they became, which still, as they
Met our sad quest, or came to us unsought,
Or as the other children in their play
Found, and with awed and solemn aspect brought,
We gathered one by one, and laid aside,—
Dearer to us than golden treasures wide!

TO ——

WE did not quite believe this world would give
To us what ne'er it had to any given,
That round our bark eternal calms should live,
That ours should ever be a stormless heaven :

Yet we, long season, were like men that dwell
In safe abodes beside some perilous shore,
Who when they hear the northern whirlwinds swell,
Who when they hear the furious breakers roar,

Think, it may be, but with too slight a thought,
On them that in the great deep labouring are,
Where winds are fierce, and waves are madly wrought,—
And lend them, it may be, a passing prayer.

Thus we, belovëd, in our safe recess
Did evermore abroad the voices hear,
In the wide world, of sorrow and distress,
With pity heard, yet us they came not near :

Or if at times they might approach us nigh,
And if at times we mourned, yet still remained
Our inner world untouched—the sanctuary
Of our blest home by sorrow unprofaned ;

When lo ! that cup which we had seen go round
To one and to another, cup of pain,
We of a sudden at our own lips found,
And it was given us deep of that to drain ;

And what had seemed at first a little cloud
On our clear sky, no broader than the hand,
Did all its lights and constellations shroud,
And gloomy wings from end to end expand.

O unforgotten day ! the earliest morn
Of the new year, when friends are wont to meet,
And while upon all faces joy is worn,
Each doth the other with kind wishes greet,

O day, whose anguish never shall wax old,
When we no longer might our fears deny,
When our hearts' secret thoughts we dared unfold
One to the other, that our child would die.

Oh ! freshly may in us the memory live
Of the mere lie which then the world did seem,
And all the world could promise or could give,—
A breaking bubble ! a departing dream !

So while this lore doth in our hearts remain,
We on the world shall lean not, that false reed,
Not strong enough our burden to sustain,
Yet sharp enough to pierce us till we bleed.

But now a pearl is from our chaplet dropt,
But now a flower is from our garland riven,
One singing fountain of our joy is stopt,
One brightest star extinguished in our heaven ;

One only—yet oh ! who may guess the change
That by that one has been among us wrought ?
How all familiar things are waxen strange
Or sad,—what silence to our house is brought ?

Or if the merry voices still arise,
Now that the captain of the games is gone,
We check them not, but still into our eyes
The tears have started at that alien tone :

And we, perchance too confident of old,
As though our blessings all were ours in fee,
Those that remain now tremulously hold,
From anxious perturbations never free ;

As though the spell were broken, and the charm
Reversed, which shielded had our house so long,
And we without defence to every harm
Lay open, and exposed to every wrong.

Oh ! thought which should not be, oh ! faith too weak,
To tremble at the slightest ache or pain,
At the least languor of the changeful cheek,
With terrors hardly to be stilled again.

Yet thus we walk within our house, in grief
For what has been, in fear for what may be,
And still the advancing days bring no relief,
But make us all our loss more plainly see ;

And when this pallid winding-sheet of snow,
Which all this dreary time the earth has wound,
Dissolves and disappears, as warm winds blow,
And the hard soil relenting is unbound ;

And when that happy season shall arrive,
To mourning hearts the saddest in its mirth,
When all things in this living world revive
Save the dear clod low-lying in the earth ;

We shall bethink us then with what delight
He used to hail, himself discovering first,
The purple or the yellow crocus bright,
Or where the snowdrop from its sheath had burst.

Oh ! then shall I remember many a walk
In shadowy woods, close hidden from the flames
Of the fierce sun, and interspersed with talk
Of ancient England's high heroic names ;

Or holier still, of them who lived and died,
That Christ's dear lore to us they might hand down
Untarnished, or his faith to spread more wide,
Winning a martyr's palm and martyr's crown ;

Or how those tales he earnestly would crave
Of old romance, our childhood's golden dower,
Which in large measure willingly we gave,
Feeding the pure imaginative power.

Oh days that never, never shall return !
The future may be rich in genial good,
We are not poor in hope, we do not mourn
The wreck of all our bliss around us strewed ;

Oh no—fair flowrets blossom in our bowers,
Rich pearls upon our chaplet still are given,
And singing fountains of delight are ours,
And stars of brightness in our earthly heaven.

Yet never can that golden time come back,
When we could look around us with an eye
Entirely satisfied, which did not lack
One of the happy number standing by ;

When yet no edge as of encroaching dark
Gave token that our moon began to wane,
When the most curious eye had failed to mark
Upon its clear bright surface speck or stain.

—Lo ! as that bird which all the wakeful night
Leaning its bosom on a poignant thorn,
So bleeds, and bleeding sings, and makes delight
For some that listen, though its heart be torn ;

Thus in this night of grief I love to lean
With wounded bosom, and so make my song,
Upon the thorn of memories sharp and keen,
Well pleasëd while I do myself this wrong.

And yet, belovëd, why should we lament
That vanished time with passionate regret—
Not rather marvelling at the rare consent
Of blessings which so long above us met?

Oh ! lot which could not aye endure, oh ! lot
Which could not be for sinful men designed ;
For we, not suffering, should have quite forgot
To feel or suffer with our suffering kind :

Oh ! lot it was to waken liveliest fears,
A lot which never have God's servants known ;—
Yea, who amid a world of grief and tears
In freedom from all pain would stand alone ?

And what though now we from this grief express
But little save its bitter, yet be sure
In this its mere unmingled bitterness
It shall not, cannot evermore endure.

But comforts shall arise, like fountains sweet
Fresh springing in a salt and dreary main,
Fountains of sweetest wave, which shipmen meet
In the waste ocean, an unlooked-for gain.

And as when some fair temple is o'erthrown
By earthquake, or by hostile hand laid waste,
At first it lies, stone rudely rent from stone,
A confused ruinous heap, and all defaced ;

Yet visit that fall'n ruin by and bye,
And what a hand of healing has been there ;
How sweetly do the placid sunbeams lie
On the green sward which all the place doth wear,

And what rich odours from the flowers are borne,
From flowers and flowering weeds, which even within
The rents and fissures of those walls forlorn
Have made their home, yea, thence their sustenance win !

So time no less has gentle skill to heal,
When our fair hopes have fall'n, our earth-built towers ;
How busy wreck and ruin to conceal
With a new overgrowth of leaves and flowers.

Nor time alone—a better hand is here,
Where it has wounded, watching to upbind ;
Which when it takes away in love severe,
Still some austerer blessing leaves behind.

Oh ! higher gifts has brought this mournful time,
Than all those years which did so smoothly run :
For what if they, life's flower and golden prime,
Had something served to knit our hearts in one ;

Yet doth that all seem little now, compared
With our brief fellowship in tears and pain;
To share the things which we have newly shared,
This makes a firmer bond, a holier chain:

To have together held that aching head,
To have together heard that piteous moan,
To have together knelt beside that bed,
When life was flitting, and when life had flown—

And to have one of ours, whose ashes sleep
Where the great church its solemn shadow flings;
Oh! love has now its roots that stretch more deep,
That strike and stretch beneath the grave of things.

Oh! more than this, yet holier bonds there are,
For we his spirit shall to ours feel nigh,
And know he lives, whenever we in prayer
Hold with heaven's saintly throng communion high.

Then wherefore more?—or wherefore this to thee—
A faithful suppliant at that inner shrine,
At which who kneel, to them 'tis given to see
How pain and grief and anguish are divine.

HERS was a mother's heart,
That poor Egyptian's, when she drew apart,
Because she would not see
Her child beloved in his last agony :

When her sad load she laid
In her despair beneath the scanty shade
In the wild waste, and stept
Aside, and long and passionately wept.

Yet higher, more sublime,
How many a mother, since that ancient time,
Has shown the mighty power
Of love divine in such another hour !

Oh ! higher love to wait
Fast by the sufferer in his worst estate,
Nor from the eyes to hide
One pang, but aye in courage to abide.

And though no Angel bring
In that dark hour unto a living spring
Of gladness,—as was sent,
Stilling her voice of turbulent lament,—

Oh ! higher faith to show,
Out of what depths of anguish and of woe
The heart is strong to raise
To an all-loving Father hymns of praise.

TO ——

O FRIEND, high thanks I owe thee, not alone
That when I did a stricken mourner stand
Beside a grave, thou cheer'dst me with true tone,
And the firm pressure of a faithful hand ;

It is not for this loving sympathy,
But for a higher blessing thanks I owe,
Thanks owe thee for a lesson plain yet high,
Taught in thy darker hour of heavier woe.

Fain had I been to shrink with coward mind
Not merely from an idle world's turmoil,
But even from friendly greetings of my kind,
Yea, quite to shun my life's appointed toil.

But when hereafter shall to me betide
Sorrow or pain, oh, then not any more
May I so seek to thrust my tasks aside ;
Oh, then may I retain a nobler lore—

From common burdens no exemption ask,
But in sustaining them best comfort find ;
As knowing life has evermore a task
Which must be done—with glad or sorrowing mind :

That pleasure as it came, even so departs,
But duty, life's true star, doth fixed remain ;
This lesson graven on my heart of hearts,
This from thy converse is my latest gain.

YONDER on that wall displayed,
Children three behold portrayed,
The resemblances of life,
With the truth of nature rife :
See one gentle girl is there,
And of boys a laughing pair ;
And, by God's good grace, the three
Round about our hearths we see,
Filling still our home with glee.

But that loved one, who has left
Us of so much joy bereft,
Whom our yearning hearts require,
Whom our aching eyes desire,
We, alas ! have not of him
Even this poor memorial dim.
Oh unhappy chance ! the three
Whom around us still we see,
Whom at any hour we may—
Every hour of every day—
To our bosoms fold and press,
Visions of delight that bless
Daily our glad eyes, and still
With their living voices fill
Full of joyfulness our bowers,
Triad sweet that still are ours ;
We may on their portraits feed,
In this richer than we need.
But that loved one, loved and lost,
Who has left our life's bleak coast,
After whom our eyes we strain,
Whom we listen for in vain,

For he comes, he comes not back,
Well-a-day ! of him we lack
Rudest effort that should trace
The dear features of his face ;
Which if it had truly caught,
Though by artless limner wrought,
It had still been in our eyes
Dearer relic, costlier prize,
Than great work of master's hand,
By far-famëd artist planned,
Looking calmly from the wall
Of some old ancestral hall.

And already, when I strive
That lost image to revive,
And his very self to paint
On my mind's eye, dim and faint
Come those features, indistinct,
Or with that last suffering linked ;
Or if they distinct and clear
For a moment may appear,
Soon they fade anew, and seem
Like the picture of a dream,
Or cloud-vision, which the breath
Of the light wind scattereth.

Years will roll, and dim and dimmer,
Through their mists, will faintly glimmer
That loved image, which e'en now
Comes not freely to my vow,
Which already memory's wand
Is not potent to command
At its bidding.—Let it be,
Let me lose all trace of thee,—
Of the earthly casket, which
Once a heavenly gem made rich,—

Of that shape which in my sight
Glanced an apparition bright ;
So that fresh in me I find
The dear features of thy mind,
So that these continue still,
And the haunts of memory fill—
Thy unerring keen delight
In all lovely things and bright,
And the largeness of thy heart,
Ever planning to impart
To thy brothers, to the poor,
Far beyond thy little store,
And thy tears which any woe,
Heard or seen, would cause to flow—
So that I do not forget
What in thee so freely met,
To thy Mother manly love—
And thy years so far above,
And beyond a childish mind,
All the pleasure thou could'st find
In whate'er I might design,
In whatever tasks were mine—
If I may remember still
How our inborn stain of ill
Did in thee break seldom forth,
Seldom came unto the birth ;
(So the holy waters laved,
With their grace so truly saved ;)
While with a delighted ear
Of thy Lord and Saviour dear
Thou didst ever love to hear ;
If these memories with me stay,
If these do not fade away,
I with unrepining heart
Will those other see depart.

NO MORE.

HEART'S brother, hast thou ever known
What meaneth that No more?
And all the bitterness outdrawn,
Close hidden at its core?

Ah no—draw from it worlds of pain,
And thou wilt surely find
That in that word there doth remain
A bitterer drop behind.

MEN will be light of heart and glad,
When we are sad;
Or if perchance our hearts are light,
With them 'tis night.

Kind Nature, but 'tis never thus
With thee and us:
But thee in all our moods we find
Unto our mind.

We laugh, and dance in all thy bowers
The jocund flowers—
We mourn, and every flower appears
Bedropt with tears.

O Mother true, from ways of men
To this far glen,
Dear Mother, to thy breast I creep,
And weep, and weep.

O HAPPY days, O months, O years,
Which, even in this dim world of woe,
'Tis now impossible can show
The print of grief, the stain of tears :

O blessëd times, which now no more
Exposed to chance or change remain ;
Which having been, no after stain
Can dim the brightness that ye wore ;

Dark shadows of approaching ill
Fall thick upon life's forward track ;
But on its past they stream not back,
What once was bright abides so still.

THAT name ! how often every day
We spake it and we heard ;
It was to us, 'mid tasks or play,
A common household word.

'Tis breathëd yet, that name—but oh !
How solemn now the sound !
One of the sanctities which throw
Such awe our homes around.

TO ——

CHILD of my spiritual love!—others I claim,
Nor are they not unto my spirit near,
While they, too, bear for me this holy name,
And by its right are dear:
And yet they do not stir for me, as thou
Stirrest the fountains of my bosom now.

For memory guardeth yet,
And will in holiest places guard the hour,
When first beside that hallowed font we met,
And on thy brow the sacred seal was set,
And given the robe of power.

Beneath my feet he lay,—
His little mouldering clay,
So lately to the heartless earth consigned,
Even his, for ever dear, the first who came
To bid me know what meant a father's name,
With a child's love about my heart to wind.

And all around me did a frequent band
Of newer mourners stand:
For thou, unconscious child, hast yet to learn
That it was at thy birth
As if a star had quitted earth,
Thee clothing in its radiance mild,
And in a splendour undefiled,
But never more in our dim air to burn.

Oh then, dear child, be thou for ever strong,
As one who for these costliest issues came
Into this world, as one to whom belong
The glory and the burden of a name,
Thy sire's and grandsire's ;—ample be thy dower !
And all thy life the unfolding, hour by hour,
Of what was at that font made thine of grace and power.

MANY times the morning laughs in light
Underneath a cloudless ether bright ;

And 'tis little thought what weeping dews
And thick rains fell heavy all the night.

Many times a cheerful mien is worn,
And men say, All tears are staunchëd quite,

Little guessing what has been erewhile
In the lonely chambers out of sight.

HALF unbelieving doth my heart remain
Of its great woe ;
I waken, and a dull dead sense of pain
Is all I know.

Then dimly in the darkness of my mind
I feel about,
To know what 'tis that troubles me, and find
My sorrow out,

And hardly with long pains my heart I bring
Its loss to own :
Still seems it so impossible a thing
That thou art gone—

That not in all my life I ever more
With pleasëd ear
Thy quick light feet advancing to my door
Again shall hear—

That thou not ever with inquiring looks
Or subtle talk
Shalt bring to me sweet hindrance 'mid my books
Or studious walk—

That, whatsoever else of good for me
In store remain,
This lieth out of hope, my child, to see
Thy face again.

SONNET.

WHEN I consider what our life hath been,
How full of devious error, far astray
From paths of truth and that one only way,
And by what mercies, strange and unforeseen,
We have been brought unto the port serene
Of faith, which many missing never may
Reach the one haven of their rest,—I say,
Dulling the edge of sorrow, else too keen,—
How shall we make untimely moan for them,
How shall we mourn beside their early grave,
Who being washed in baptism's holy wave
From that first taint which doth us all condemn,
Passed from this evil world, and never aught
Of our life's darker stains from hence have caught?

WHERE thou hast touched, O wondrous Death!
Where thou hast come between,
Lo! there for ever perisheth
The common and the mean.

No little flaw, or trivial speck
Doth any more appear,
And cannot from this time, to fleck
Love's perfect image clear.

Clear stands Love's perfect image now,
And shall do evermore;
And we in awe and wonder bow
The glorified before.

WHEN its higher faith this heart denies,
Bare and open to the world's glare lies,

Presently, ye blessëd ones, ye seem
Turning hither sad reproachful eyes ;

Gaze ye then on this unholy heart
With a solemn and a sad surprise.

'When we left you,' so the voices come,
'When the last light faded from our eyes,

When the last farewells found hardly way,
Hardly spoken amid sobs and sighs,

Was not this our trust in death, that ye
Would to God be faithful anywise,

That one love to Him would link us yet,
You on earth, and us in Paradise?'

—O ye blessëd voices of rebuke,
When ye reach me, straightway I arise ;

And exclaim I, bidding to depart
The world's flatteries, and lures, and lies,

'Grant us ever to keep faith with Thee,
Lord, and with our saints in Paradise.'

'WHAT pang is permanent with man? From the highest,
As from the meanest thing of every day,
He learns to wean himself: for the strong hours
Conquer him.'—SCHILLER.

WHO that a watcher doth remain
Beside a couch of mortal pain,
Deems he can ever smile again?

Or who that weeps beside a bier
Counts he has any more to fear
From the world's flatteries, false and leer?

And yet anon and he must start
At the light toys in which his heart
Can now already claim its part.

O hearts of ours! so weak and poor,
That nothing there can long endure;
And so their hurts find shameful cure,

While every sadder, wiser thought,
Each holier aim which sorrow brought,
Fades quite away and comes to nought.

O Thou, who dost our weakness know,
Watch for us, that the strong hours so
Not wean us from our wholesome woe.

Grant Thou, that we may long retain
The wholesome memories of pain,
Nor wish to lose them soon again.

Christmas, 1841.

IF our high debt of holy glee
This day we have not fully paid,
If other thoughts have dared invade
The time, yet pardoned this shall be :

For these, how should they not have flung
Some shadow on this day perforce,
When alway through its solemn course
One presence has about us hung ?

Even his, who with us still abode,
When last our yule-fires burned, although
Even then already girt to go,
Young pilgrim for so rough a road?

The image of his pale meek face,
As he, though full of silent pain,
Among the household band was fain
This festal eve to keep his place :

In weakness and in pain he lay,
In heavier pain than then we knew,
While yet the coming anguish threw
No shadow on our forward way.

Near was it, yet we little deemed
One step would bring us into gloom,
Another set us by a tomb,
But all secure and constant seemed.

Now, living o'er that time anew,
Sad are we—yet, I would believe,
Not thus unfitted to receive
Our share in this day's blessings true :

For He who once, a Heavenly Child,
Came to a world not clad in bright
Spring-blossoms, nor in gay leaves dight,
But to its winter bleak and wild,

To faithful hearts comes evermore,
When Grief has touched with finger sere
The splendours of life's earlier year,
As never He had come before.

THE LENT JEWELS.

A JEWISH APOLOGUE.

IN schools of wisdom all the day was spent :
His steps at eve the Rabbi homeward bent,
With homeward thoughts, which dwelt upon the wife
And two fair children who consoled his life.
She, meeting at the threshold, led him in,
And with these words preventing, did begin :
'I, greeting ever your desired return,
Yet greet it most to-day ; for since this morn
I have been much perplexed and sorely tried
Upon one point, which you must now decide.
Some years ago, a friend into my care
Some jewels gave, rich precious gems they were ;
But having given them in my charge, this friend
Did afterwards nor come for them, nor send,
But in my keeping suffered them for long,
Till now it almost seems to me a wrong

That he should suddenly arrive to-day,
To take those jewels, which he left, away.
What think you? Shall I freely yield them back,
And with no murmuring?—so henceforth to lack
Those gems myself, which I had learned to see
Almost as mine for ever, mine in fee.'

'What question can be here? your own true heart
Must needs advise you of the only part;
That may be claimed again which was but lent,
And should be yielded with no discontent;
Nor surely can we find in this a wrong,
That it was left us to enjoy it long.'

'Good is the word,' she answered; 'may we now
And evermore that it is good allow!'
And, rising, to an inner chamber led,
And there she showed him, stretched upon one bed,
Two children pale, and he the jewels knew,
Which God had lent him, and resumed anew.

O LIFE, O death, O world, O time,
O grave, where all things flow,
'Tis yours to make our lot sublime
With your great weight of woe.

Though sharpest anguish hearts may wring,
Though bosoms torn may be,
Yet suffering is a holy thing;
Without it what were we?

FROM THE ARABIC.

DESPAIR not in the vale of woe,
Where many joys from suffering flow.

Oft breathes simoom, and close behind
A breath of God doth softly blow.

Clouds threaten, but a ray of light,
And not of lightning, falls below.

How many winters o'er thy head
Have passed ; yet bald it does not show.

Thy branches are not bare, and yet
What storms have shook them to and fro.

To thee has Time brought many joys,
If many it has bid to go ;

And seasoned has with bitterness
Thy cup, that flat it should not grow.

Trust in that veilëd hand, which leads
None by the path that he would go ;

And always be for change prepared,
For the world's law is ebb and flow.

Stand fast in suffering, until He
Who called it, shall dismiss also ;

And from that Lord all good expect,
Who many mercies strews below ;

Who in life's narrow garden-strip
Has bid delights unnumbered blow.

ON THE DEATH OF AN INFANT.

'MID sterner losses let us own one gain—
An infant this will evermore remain :
Those other, should they reach life's longer date,
In them the coming will obliterate
The past ; and we shall what they were forget,
Our eyes upon their later semblance set ;
But this remaineth an eternal child.
Might sorrow for a little be beguiled
Even with this thought a soothing fancy brings !
Her image has escaped the flux of things,
And that same infant beauty which she wore
Is fixed upon her now for evermore—
The everlasting garment fresh and new
Which in our eyes will ever her endue ;
Which she will not put off, as the others must,
For garments soilëd more with this world's dust :
As though a bud should be a bud for ever,
A crystal rill ne'er swell to turbid river ;
As though on aught most fleeting and most fair,
On roseate tints which clouds of evening wear,
We might lay hands, and fix them ever there.

A JEWISH APOLOGUE.

UP and down his gardens paced a King,
In the glorious season of the spring.

Lovely flowrets there by him were seen
In their earliest bud and blossoming.

How should he those lovely flowrets pull,
Half whose glory lay a hidden thing?

When a few short days were gone, again
Visited his garden-plots the King:

And those flowers, so dewy, fresh, and fair,
Brighter than the brightest insect's wing,

Each was hanging now a drooping head,
Each lay now a wan discoloured thing;

And he thought, Their scent and sweetness I
Had rejoiced in, earlier gathering.

So when in his gardens of delight
Did that Monarch pace another spring,

And the folded buds again admired,
That did round them fragrant odour fling,

He with timely hand prevented now
The sad season of their withering,

Culled them in the glory of their prime,
Ere their fresh delight had taken wing,

Culled the young and beautiful, and laid
In his bosom gently, home to bring.

ON REVISITING THE SEINE.

YE are the same, ye meadows and green banks
And pastures level to the river's edge ;
Ye shores with poplar fringed in graceful ranks,
And towns that nestle under rocky ledge ;

Ye island-spots of greenery, fast embraced
By the dividing arms of this fair stream,
Which, parting for a moment, meet in haste,
And then in breadths of lake-like beauty gleam.

The quiet cattle, feeding quietly,
They seem the very same I saw of yore ;
And the same picture lives upon mine eye,
Methinks, that lived upon mine eye before.

Fair were ye, seen of old ; ye now are fair,
As ye were then : and not a change appears,
Unless that all doth stranger beauty wear,
This time beholden through a mist of tears.

For oh ! ye streams, ye meadows, and ye hills,
To which there cometh no mutation nigh,
Dim trouble at your sight my bosom fills,
You looking at me with this changeless eye.

It troubles me that ye, unfeeling things,
Should be exempted from our tears and fears,
While we—the lords of nature and its kings—
Servile remain to all the changeful years.

On this swift-sliding stream I sail once more,
Whose beauty brings unutterable pain ;
For ye who saw with me this sight before,
Three were ye—but, oh ! where are now the twain ?

Ye are not here—the floods, the hills are here,
They look on me with their unaltered eye ;
Dowered with a strength eternal they appear,
And we like weak wan phantoms flitting by.

THIS winter eve how soft ! how mild !
How calm the earth ! how calm the sea !
The earth is like a weary child,
And ocean chants its lullaby.

A little murmur in mine ear !
A little ripple at my feet !
They only make the silence here,
Which they disturb not, more complete.

I wander on the sands apart ;
I watch the sun, world-wearied, sink
Into his grave :—with tranquil heart
Upon the loved and lost I think.

TO ——

DEAR sister, that hast wandered forth with me,
From patient vigils needed now no more,
A watcher most unwillingly set free
From love's long service, which at last is o'er,—

From chambers, where the candles of the night
Far into day, unquenched, unheeded, burn,
While unregarded comes the dreary light,
The unnoted breaking of the dreary morn—

Who hast come forth to let the breeze of May
Blow on thy cheek amid another scene,
Fair sights have we beholden day by day,
While on this Norman soil our feet have been.

'Mid clustering shafts and pinnacles and towers
Of many a tall cathedral have we stood,
Have sailed up lovely streams for pleasant hours,
And there and here have found our spirits' food.

Yet still this thought would in our hearts arise,
When aught of rarer beauty met our sight,
This thought of sadness,—*they* are shut, those eyes
To which this vision had brought keen delight ;

To which all lovely things were welcome still,
As footprints of a Beauty, whither turned
Her spirit alway ; and of which her fill
To drink for ever, fervently she yearned.

This was our grief ; be it our joy as well,—
That they are closed and she no longer sees
Our glimpses faint which of that Beauty tell,
To open on the eternal fount of these.

O FRIEND, it seems when first our lives begin,
When we, fresh mariners, first hoist the sail,
On favouring seas by favouring breezes borne,
As though the bark of our felicity
Could never be ornately trimmed enough,
Nor be enough full-freighted with delights;
As though each thing we wanted were a wrong
Done to us;—so we loosen from the land.
But what another lesson will anon
Be learnëd, and of them who claimed so much,
Deeming it all too little for their needs,
Some will be thankful if one broken plank
Of all their tempest-shattered bark remain,
Bearing them up above the salt-sea foam
Of this world's infelicity to shore.
But that dream vanishing, other dreams succeed,
And when upon the shoals or rocks of life
Some shipwreck we have suffered, we would bide,
Singing sad dirges o'er our sunken wealth
For ever. Oh, but life is strong! and still
Bears with its currents onward us who fain
Would linger where our treasures have gone down,
Though but to mark the ripple on the wave,
The small disturbing eddies that betray
The place of shipwreck: life is strong, and still
Bears onward to new tasks and sorrows new,
Whether we will or no.

Life bears us on,
And yet not so, but that there may survive
Something to us; sweet odours reach us yet,
Brought sweetly from the fields long left behind

Of holy joy, or sorrow holier still :
As I remember when, long years ago,
With the companions of my youth, I rode
'Mid Sicily's holm oaks and pastoral dells
All in the flowery spring, through fields of thyme,
Fields of all flowers,—no lovelier Enna knew,—
There came to us long after, blown from these,
Rich odours that pursued us many a mile,
Embalming all the air :—so rode we on,
Though we had changed our verdant meadow-paths
For steep rough tracks up dusty river-beds,
Yet haunted by that odorous fragrance still.

Then let us be content in spirit, though
We cannot walk, as we are fain to do,
Within the solemn shadow of our griefs
For ever ; but must needs come down again
From the bright skirts of those protecting clouds,
To tread the common paths of earth anew.
Then let us be content to leave behind us
So much ; which yet we leave not quite behind ;
For the bright memories of the holy dead,
The blessëd ones departed, shine on us
Like the pure splendours of some clear large star,
Which pilgrims, travelling onward, at their backs
Leave, and at every moment see not now ;
Yet, whensoe'er they list, may pause and turn,
And with its glories gild their faces still :
Or as beneath a northern sky is seen
The sunken sunset glowing in the west,
A tender radiance there surviving long,
Which has not faded all away, before
The flaming banners of the morn advance
Over the summits of the orient hills.

NOTES.

Page 11. *The Monk and Bird.*

More than one German poet has dealt with this legend. Thus see in Wolff's *Poet. Hausschatz*, p. 387.

Page 41. *An Evening in France.*

See S. Augustine, *Confessions*, ix. 10.

Page 135. *Retribution.*

I sent to Frederick Rückert a little volume containing translations from some of his poems, and also these verses. I print his reply:—

'Hochgeehrter Herr,—Ich danke Ihnen für die Uebersendung Ihres Büchleins, das mir eine ungemeine Freude gemacht hat, durch seinen so reichen sittlichen Gehalt in so schönen dichterischen Formen, so wie durch die liebevolle Nachbildung einiger Stücke von mir. Ich wünsche mir Glück zu einem solchen Vermittler für meine Dichtungen bei Ihren edlen Landsleuten, die nunmehr auch nach uns sich umsehen wie wir so lange schon nach ihnen. Das fabrikmässige Uebersetzen von Dichterwerken, wie es unter uns betrieben wird, liebe ich nicht, ja halte es für verderblich; aber eine solche freie und innige, gegenseitige Aneignung ist erfreulich und erspriesslich. Auch von Ihren Versen haben mich manche zur Nachbildung angereizt, doch bis jetzt habe ich nur "Retribution," S. 133, für mein Tagebuch so in Trimeter zusammengefasst:

> "Gerechter Himmel, der du dies geordnet hast;
> Wer Freude sucht als eignes Ziel verfehlt sie nur;
> Wer im Berufe wandelt von der Pflicht geführt,
> Die Freude findet er überall am Wege blühn."

Nun hoffe ich auch einigen meiner hiesigen Bekannten, die mit Vorliebe das Englische lesen, durch Mittheilung Ihres Werkes einen Genuss zu bereiten.

'Ihr ergebenster,

'Erlangen, d. 19. *Juni* 1840.' 'Friedr. Rückert.'

Page 193. *The Steadfast Prince.*

The subject and name of this poem were suggested by Calderon's noble drama, *El Principe Constante*, admirably translated into German by Schlegel. But I owe much more to a *Life* of the Prince, Berlin, 1827, which gives many original documents connected with the unfortunate expedition to Africa, and details of the captivity, sufferings, and death of the Prince ;—a little volume which well exemplifies how far richer and deeper will oftentimes be the simple truth than any fiction ; since all that even so great a poet as Calderon has imagined to shed a glory round his Christian hero is weak and poor, compared with the simple reality. This prince was on one side English, his mother, Philippa, who married John the First of Portugal, being sister to our fourth Henry.

Page 217. *Orpheus and the Sirens.*

'Orpheus laudes Deorum cantans et reboans, Sirenum voces confudit et summovit : meditationes enim rerum divinarum voluptates sensûs non tantum potestate, sed etiam suavitate superant.'—Lord Bacon, *Sapientia Veterum.*

Page 220. *Let us turn hitherward our bark, they cried.*

Mr. Holden has done me the honour to include more than one translation from this poem in his *Folia Silvulæ*, pp. 342, 343. This is from his own pen.

Huc feriantes ibimus, ibimus,
Ridens amœnum quo vocat insula,
Paulisper obliti laboris
Præteriti simul ac futuri ;
Et mox refecti corpora obibimus
Rursus laborem, si superest labor,
Rursusque pectemus marinam
Præpete canitiem carinâ ?
Quo dia proles tenditis, immemor
Famæ prioris, sanguinis immemor ?
Quid voltis ? at quondam pigebit
Degeneres maculasse nomen.
Blandis sed illi vocibus illicum
Iam iamque prensant litora creduli ;
Fractis nec advertere fœdam
Undique navigiis harenam,
Aut visa nullos incutiunt metus :
Neque usta ventis, usta caloribus,
Quis omnis albescebat ora
Ossa monent revocare gressum.

Page 230. *The Oil of Mercy.*

The traditions of a relation between the Tree of Life which was set in Paradise, and the Cross on which hung the Saviour of the world, are almost infinite; or, rather, the one deep idea of their identity has clothed itself in innumerable forms. They constitute one of the richest portions of what may perhaps, without offence, be termed the mythology of the Christian Church. That which I have followed here is given in the *Evangelium Nicodemi*, c. 19 (Thilo, *Codex Apocryphus*, vol. i. p. 684). They have been twice wrought up into sublime dramatic poems by Calderon; once in his Auto, *El Arbol del mejor Fruto;* and again in that which is indeed only the same poem in a later and more perfect form, *La Sibila del Oriente*. We have the same tradition of Seth going to the gates of Paradise in the fine old Cornish Mystery, *The Creation of the World*, and references to it are frequent in the popular literature of the middle ages; see, for instance, Goethe's recension of the *Reineke Fuchs*, the tenth book; and Mandeville's *Travels*. Rückert (see p. 236) gives the tradition in somewhat a different shape.

This poem, which owes much to Calderon, is written in Spanish *assonants*, in which words are considered to rhyme which have the same vowel-sounds, though the consonants are different; thus *angel* and *raiment*, having the same vowel-sounds, *a—e*, are perfect assonant rhymes. As in the Persian Ghazel, one rhyme runs through the whole poem, in which all the alternate lines, beginning with the second, terminate: and of course the rhythmical effect must be judged, not by any half-dozen lines apart, but by the total impression which the poem continuously read leaves on the ear.

Page 244. *Mooltan.*

'A company of Moolraj's Muzubees, or outcasts turned Sikhs, led on the mob. It was an appalling sight; and Sirdar Khan Sing begged of Mr. Agnew to be allowed to wave a sheet, and sue for mercy. Weak in body from loss of blood, Agnew's heart failed him not. He replied, "The time for mercy is gone; let none be asked for. They can kill us two if they like, but we are not the last of the English; *thousands of Englishmen will come down here when we are gone, and annihilate Moolraj, and his soldiers, and his fort!*" The crowd now rushed in with horrible shouts; made Khan Sing prisoner, and pushing aside the servants with the butts of their muskets, surrounded the two wounded officers. Lieutenant Anderson, from the first, had been too much wounded even to move; and now Mr. Agnew was sitting by his bedside, holding his hand, and talking in English. Doubtless, they were bidding each other farewell for all time. . . . . Anderson was hacked to death with swords, and afterwards the two bodies were dragged outside, and slashed and insulted by the crowd, then left all night under the sky.'—EDWARDES, *Year on the Punjaub Frontier*, vol. ii. p. 58.

'The besieging army did not march away to other fields without perform-

ing its last melancholy duty to the memory of Agnew and Anderson. The bodies of those officers were carefully—I may say affectionately—removed from the careless grave where they lay side by side; and, wrapped in Cashmere shawls, (with a vain but natural desire to obliterate all traces of neglect,) were borne by the soldiers of the 1st Bombay Fusiliers (Anderson's own regiment) to an honoured resting-place on the summit of Moolraj's citadel. By what way borne? Through the gate where they had been first assaulted? Oh, no! through the broad and sloping breach, which had been made by the British guns in the walls of the rebellious fortress of Mooltan.'—*The Same*, p. 588.

Page 263. *The Etrurian King.*

See Mrs. Hamilton Gray's *Sepulcres of Etruria*.

Page 267. Poems from Eastern Sources.

These Poems bear somewhat a vague title, because such only would accurately suit compositions derived in very different degrees from the sources thus indicated. Some are mere translations; others have been modelled anew, and only such portions used of the originals as were adapted to my purpose; of others it is only the imagery and thought which are Eastern, and these have been put together in new combinations; while of others it is the hint, and nothing more, which has been borrowed,—it may be from some prose source.

Page 267. *Alexander at the Gates of Paradise.*

See Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judenthum*, vol. ii. p. 321, with whose judgment I cannot agree, for he has scarcely patience to finish this 'narrische talmudische Fabel,' as he styles it. It reappears, slightly modified, in the Persian tradition that Alexander, having conquered the world, determined to seek out the fountain of life and immortality. So in the Christian poems of the Middle Ages, he recognizes at last the emptiness of all the glory which he has won, and is hardly turned from his purpose of going forth in search of the lost Paradise (Rosenkranz, *Gesch. d. deutschen Poesie im Mittelalter*, p. 367). Chamisso has treated the same legend, from whom I have derived several hints.

Page 272. *Chidher's Well.*

Of Chidher's Well, the Eastern λουτρὸν παλιγγενεσίας, Von Hammer, in the very interesting introduction to his *History of Persian Poetry*, gives this account: 'Contemporary with Moses lived the Prophet Chiser, of

whom some hold that he is the same with Elias, while others altogether distinguish them. He is one of the chief personages of Eastern mythology, the ever-ready helper of the oppressed, the Genius of spring, the deliverer in peril, the admonisher of princes, the avenger of unrighteousness, the guide through the wilderness of the world, and, finally, the ever-youthful guardian of the fountain of life. As such he revives the youth of men and beasts and plants, gives back lost beauty, and in spring arrays the dead earth with its fresh garments of green. His fountain bestows on whomsoever drinks it eternal beauty, youth, and wisdom. What wonder then that all mortals with burning desire seek it, though as yet not one, not even Alexander, the conqueror of the world, who, in quest of it, undertook an expedition into the land of darkness, has found it!' Probably this, his journey through the land of darkness, is but a mythic form of his expedition through the Libyan desert to the temple of Jupiter Ammon.

Page 279. *The Breaker of Idols.*

Mahmoud, the great Mahomedan conqueror of India, reached, in his career of victory, Somnát, of which the gates have since become familiar to us —a temple of peculiar sanctity in the southern extremity of Guzerát. Having overcome all resistance, he entered the temple. 'Facing the entrance was Somnát—an idol five yards high, of which two were buried in the ground. Mahmoud instantly ordered the image to be destroyed; when the Bramins of the temple threw themselves before him, and offered an enormous ransom if he would spare their deity. . . . . Mahmoud, after a moment's pause, declared that he would rather be remembered as the breaker than the seller of idols, and struck the image with his mace. His example was instantaneously followed, and the image, which was hollow, burst with the blows, and poured forth a quantity of diamonds and other jewels which amply repaid Mahmoud for the sacrifice of the ransom.'—Elphinstone, *History of India*, vol. i. p. 554. There is a later poem on the same subject by Lowell, *Under the Willows*, p. 135.

Page 283. *The Banished Kings.*

See Rückert, *Brahmanische Erzählungen*, p. 5; on the model of whose poem, my own, without pretending to be an accurate translation, is closely formed. The apologue owns, I believe, a higher antiquity even than the beautiful Greek romance of the seventh or eighth century, *Barlaam and Josaphat*, often ascribed, though on no sufficient grounds, to John of Damascus; but, at any rate, it is one of the many exquisite apologues with which that work is adorned.

Page 289. *The Barmecides.*

See Sylvestre de Sacy, *Chrestomathie Arabe*, vol. ii.; and D'Herbelot *Bibliothèque Orientale*, s. v. Barmekian.

Page 294. *The Festival.*

See Sylvestre de Sacy, *Chrestomathie Arabe*, vol. ii. p. 3.

Page 299. *The Eastern Narcissus.*

In the attempt of the Neo-Platonists to put a new life into the old Grecian mythology, Narcissus falling in love with his own image in the water-brook was made the symbol of man casting himself forth into the world of shows and appearances, and expecting to find the good that would answer to his nature there, but indeed finding nothing but disappointment and death.—The fable is Feridoddin Attar's, who, born in 1216, perished in the invasion of Dschengischan. He was originally a rich merchant of spices. A pious dervisch entered his warehouse one day and craved an alms. Ferid bade him to be gone. The dervisch answered, 'That can I do easily, for I possess nothing save my hood; but thou, with so many heavy sacks, how wilt thou contrive to be gone, when the hour of thy departure has arrived?' These words made so deep an impression on Ferid, that, from that moment, he gave up his worldly strivings, and dedicated himself to the spiritual life.

Page 306. *Moses and Jethro.*

See Tholuck, *Blüthensammlung aus der morgenländischen Mystik*, p. 128.

Page 312. *Harmosan.*

See Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, c. 51.

Page 314. *Life through Death.*

See Tholuck, *Blüthensammlung aus der morgenländischen Mystik*, p. 69.

Ibid. l. 12.

Like Jesus' breath of balm 'tis cool and sweet.

The Mahomedans believe that in the *breath* of Christ lay the healing virtue, by which his miraculous cures were effected.

Ibid. l. 17.

Come, Abraham's secret, when he found alone
Sweet roses in the furnace, here is known.

It is a tradition alike Jewish and Mahomedan, that Abraham was flung into a furnace by Nimrod, for refusing to worship his false gods; whereupon the flames, instead of scorching and consuming, were turned for him into a bed of jasmine and roses.

Page 316. *The World.*

See Von Hammer, *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens*, p. 230.

Page 317. *The Suppliant.*

See Tholuck, *Blüthensammlung aus der morgenländischen Mystik*, p. 84.

Page 319. *The Monk and Sinner.*

See the same, p. 251. All must be struck with the deep moral resemblance which this story of Saadi's bears to the incident recorded by St. Luke, vii. 36—40. We have here reproduced to us the Pharisee and the woman that was a sinner, and all the deeper relations of law and grace which belong to that history.

Page 324. *The Pantheist.*

See the same, p. 255, and his *Ssufismus*, pp. 133—145. The doctrine of evil, as not indeed evil, but only an inferior kind of good, to which the pantheist is of necessity driven, is wrought out with great skill and frequency by the Eastern Mystics—often comes out in their writings in its most offensive shapes. It is instructive to notice how completely they have anticipated this view, which continually reappears in the philosophical systems of our own day, and is in them brought forward as some mighty discovery, and a key to all the perplexities of the world.

Page 326. *The Righteous of the World.*

See Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judenthum*, s. v. p. 362.

Page 332. *The Conversion of Abraham.*

See D'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque Orientale*, s. v. Abraham.

Page 333. *The True Pilgrim.*

The deeper religious minds of Mahomedanism spiritualize the pilgrimage to Mecca, and do not fail to urge that the performance of its outward details of duty will profit nothing, unless regarded as signs and symbols of higher truths. See in proof the *Abu Seid* of Hariri (Rückert's translation, vol. ii.

pp. 36—46), a book equal in wit, and in many higher qualities immeasurably superior, to *Gil Blas*, the European work with which it naturally suggests a comparison.

Page 333, l. 15.

Circling the sacred shrine in many a ring.

The Caaba, the aim and object to which the pilgrimage is properly directed, is a plain unpretending edifice. The Loretto of Mahomedanism having Seth for its builder, it was at the deluge carried by angels into heaven ; and when that was past, brought back to earth. The reverence attached to it dates back to a period far anterior to the rise of Islam. The new religion adopted it with so much else into itself.

Ibid. l. 16.

And duly drank of Zemsem's holy spring.

The holy well at Mecca, from which no pilgrim omits to draw water and to drink. It is said to be the same which sprang up in the wilderness for Hagar and her child.

Ibid. l. 18.

Doth now coalblack through breath of sinners show.

This stone, also a legacy from Arabian heathenism to 'the Faith,' is fixed at about a man's height in the outer wall of the Caaba, and is duly kissed by every pilgrim. Snow-white when it fell from heaven, it has from the breath of sinners become perfectly black.

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